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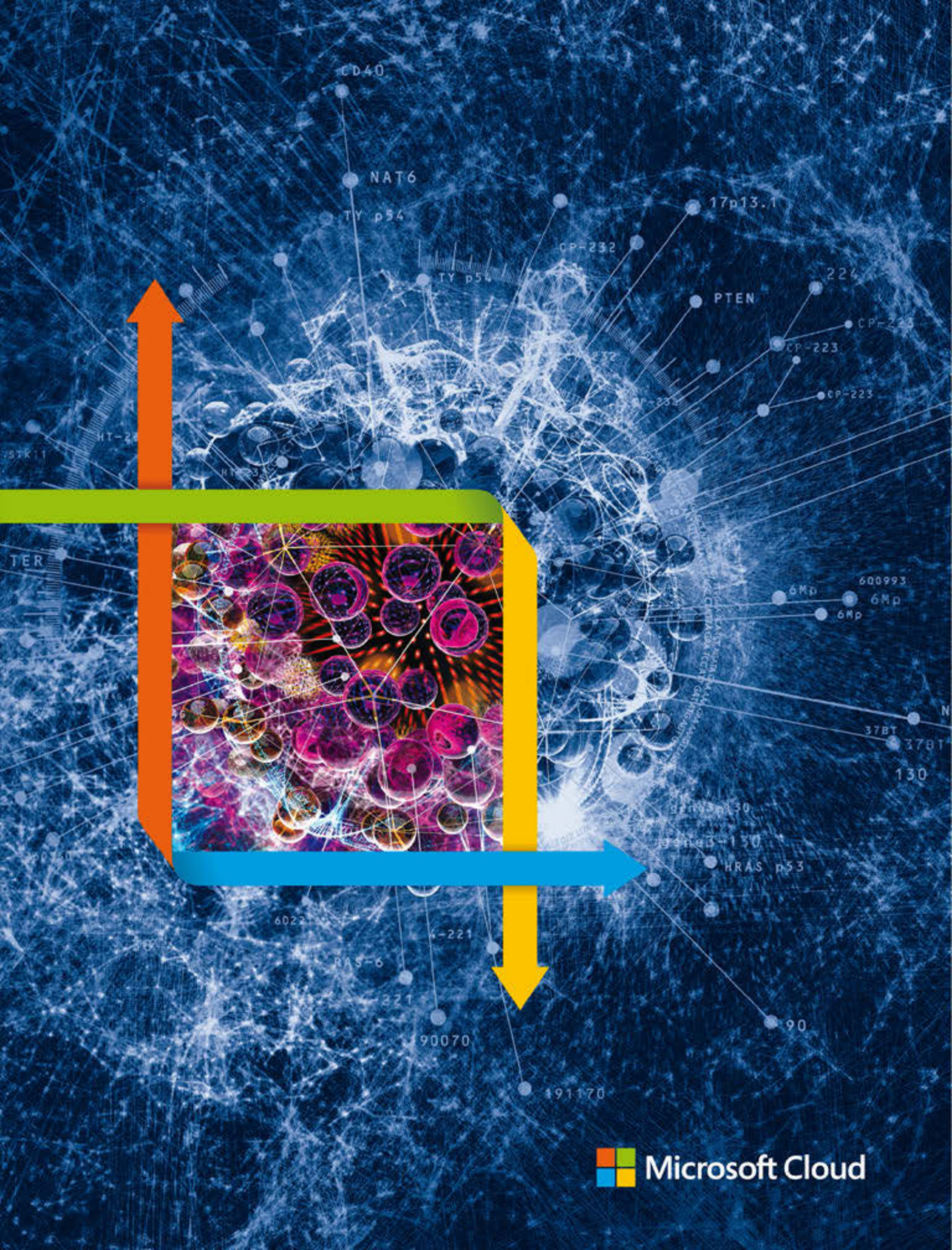
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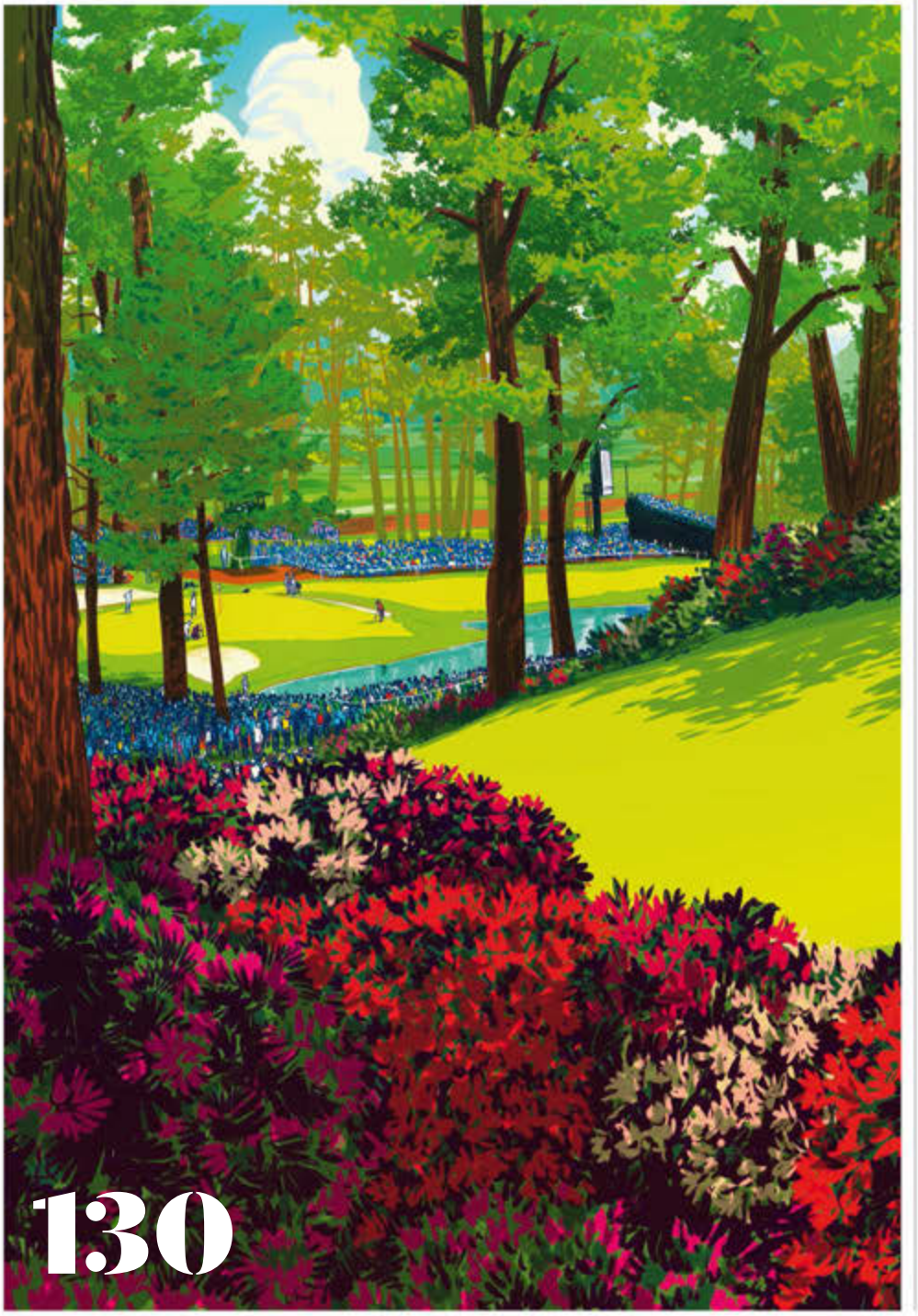
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Editor's Letter



Masters week for a **first-year** Augusta National member

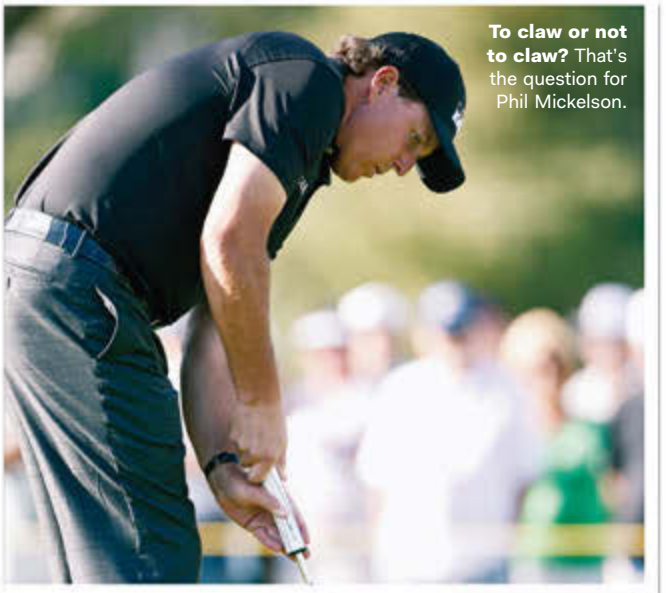
No Ordinary People

JERRY TARDE
Chairman and Editor-in-Chief

Early in the year, I like to catch up on the PGA Tour and play some golf out West for a couple of long weekends, if only to shake my Yankee cobwebs. Who knew you're allowed to check your email on a smartphone without getting tackled in the clubhouse? I saw live music on the practice range, gym shorts on the course and hats worn indoors while eating (a double negative).

My first trip was to the Madison Club in La Quinta, Calif., where I played with **Phil Mickelson**, who never looked so good. He'd lost about 15 pounds. For the first time ever I thought he resembled an athlete. Phil said he went gluten-free last year and sugar-free this year. His life is in balance, and he's even been able to reduce his arthritis meds.

At age 44, Phil probably has only a couple of years left for winning majors, but don't be surprised if he's a factor this summer. He spouted all the science on Callaway's new low-compression Chrome Soft ball and why a hack at 90 miles per hour (me) should play the same ball as a 115-mph pro (him). Lefty is never short on statistics, and it was fascinating to hear his latest putting revelation. He said he always considered himself a good long putter, but his weakness was short putting. Over the winter break, he practiced 1,000 putts from varying distances with coach **Dave Pelz**, and they determined that under six feet he makes 91 percent of putts using the claw grip and only 71 percent putting conventionally. "Twenty percent is a serious differential," he said, so his plan this year was to go conventional on long putts and claw anything under six feet. Before I could type the previous sentence, **Tim Rosaforte** sent Phil a text asking if he was sticking with the claw, and Phil texted back one word: "No." Sounds like golf.



To claw or not to claw? That's the question for Phil Mickelson.

I played one day with **Harry Styles** of the British band One Direction, and the next day with **Justin Thomas**, who both rank with **Jordan Spieth** in the 21-and-Awesome Category, according to my kids. Earlier we'd watched Mickelson and **Keegan Bradley** trash-talk each other at a driving contest (Phil won). Justin said in barely a stage whisper, "I'm longer than both of them, but I didn't want to get in the way." At 143 pounds and averaging over 303 yards, he's the longest driver pound-for-pound on the PGA Tour. (*See page 62 for a look at his rookie year.*) "It makes no sense why I hit it as far as I do," Justin says. If he makes the Masters field, he'll be my dark-horse pick.

Where we played, the Madison Club, is solidly in the 1 percentile of America's Greatest, but the on-course food is even more impressive. Founder **Mike Meldman** of Discovery Land Co. and music mogul **Irving Azoff** realized when they took up golf that the game was a bit slow and they were hungry, so every four holes there's a Comfort Station with Kobe sliders, fish tacos, Meldman's brand of Casamigos Tequila frosties, dozens of exotic fruits and, well, you get the picture. If you stand over the ball long enough, you'll be served a three-course meal. **Tommy Armour III** called it "a five-pound round." My only disappointment was to learn that you're no longer met on the 18th green with a root-beer float. Instead, you choose between peach- or mint-scented hot towels to freshen up before entering the clubhouse. I played in a sixsome, or maybe it was a sevensome, with **Jerry Weintraub**, the movie producer who belongs to Royal Dornoch, and **Andy Garcia**, who's making a movie about **Ernest Hemingway**. When I stopped at a red light on the way to the course, **Phil Knight** jogged by my car. Are there no ordinary people in California?

The next week while the pros were at the Waste Management Phoenix Open next door, we got rained out at Whisper Rock in Scottsdale. Kind of a Casablanca line: "I came to the desert for the waters." All sorts of Mickelsons, **Brandt Snedekers** and **Brandel Chamblees** were hanging out there. I noticed Phil was a plus-8 on the handicap sheet in the locker room.

That's when I took my annual golf lesson from the World's Greatest Teacher You Probably Don't Know, **Shelby Futch**, at his Orange Tree Golf Club nearby. Shelby is a champion aerobatic pilot and owner of a gaggle of public courses in Arizona.

He told me to strengthen my left grip by holding the club more in my fingers than in the palm and rotating my left forearm on the backswing, slowly. Then keep my head centered as I turn through. My forward swing should feel as if the club is facing the sky all the way around to the left, like **Lee Trevino**. And he said to practice-swing with the clubhead about a foot above the ball. Best lesson I ever got. The results were immediate: higher trajectory with more snap. Hold on. Rosaforte is texting me.

MY TOP 5

PLACES TO HANG IN GOLF:

1 / **The 19th Hole at Whisper Rock, Scottsdale, with Phil Mickelson and Gary McCord holding court.**

2 / **The Big Room at the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, especially now that it welcomes women.**

3 / **The Tap Room at Pebble Beach when the Yang brothers, Jerry and Geoff, are in town.**

4 / **Arnold Palmer's Table at Bay Hill in Orlando in winter, Latrobe (Pa.) Country Club in summer.**

5 / **The side porch at Burning Tree in Bethesda, Md., smoking cigars even if you don't smoke cigars.**

MICKELSON: TODD WARSHAW/GETTY IMAGES • ILLUSTRATION: ZOHAR LAZAR



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"My best Masters story involves..."

A private tour of the Crow's Nest

Tom Brokaw, a Chrysler and bad directions

Corn-whiskey and a huge Calcutta

Hooters and my college teammates

Arnold Palmer and his last competitive round

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Azaleas—the drink, not the flower

The last one I wrote

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Playing the course the Monday after

Tiger's chip-in and my tears

THE BALL THAT CHANGED THE BALL.



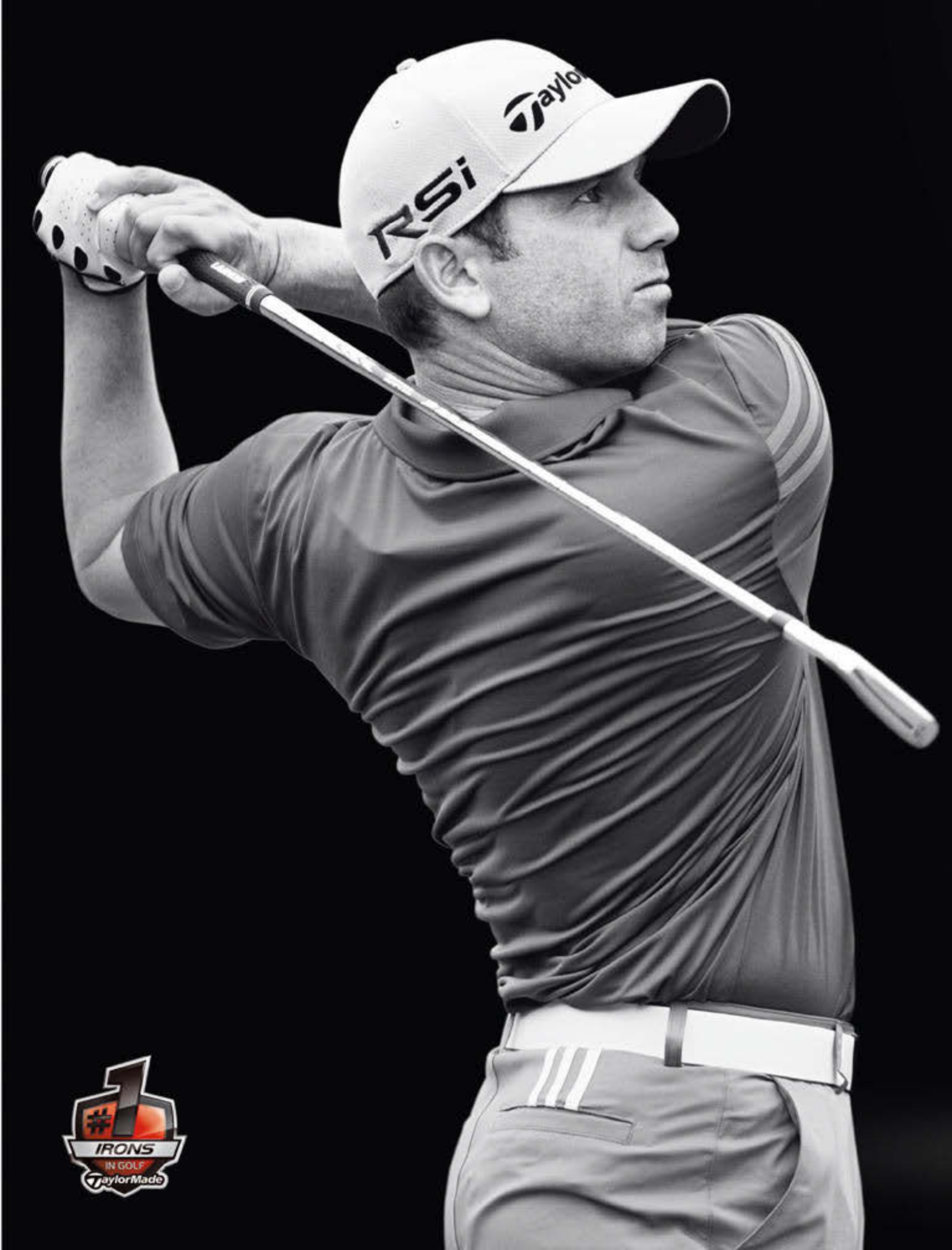
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Play

Stick It!

3 go-to shots for getting up and down

BY CHRIS KIRK

It's nice being good enough to have options around the greens, but I usually end up playing a shot that's well within my wheelhouse. In the first round of the Tour Championship last year, on the par-4 17th hole, I faced an up-and-down from just short of the green. The hole was cut in the back, just over a ridge. I could have flopped it, played a bump-and-run or even putted it. In the end I went with a trusted shot—my "driving spinner." Playing the ball back in my stance, I banged it low and firm into the ridge with my 59-degree wedge. The ball bounced once, checked, then rolled in for a birdie. I shot 66, and tied for fourth. The key to that shot: minimal wrist break (*below*), so you're applying speed with your arms and shoulders more than with your hands. It reaffirmed to me that hitting the reliable shot is better than getting fancy. Turn the page for a couple more shots I love to play. —WITH GUY YOCOM



Photographs by Dom Furore



THE DEEP-ROUGH SLIDER

When the rough is thick, the temptation is to go down after the ball and slash it out. That's a bad policy, even from the heavy greenside rough we see on tour. If you're hitting down sharply and thumping the ground beneath the ball, you're creating too much speed and making it tough to control how far you hit the shot. You also risk catching it fat, which from thick rough pretty much guarantees failure.

The better way to play this shot is to make the clubhead travel as level as possible through the ball so you shred some grass but not so much that you feel a lot of resistance. Choose your most-lofted wedge—for me, it's my 59—and open the clubface so the grass is less likely to grab the leading edge and kill the club's momentum. Swing back and through with a steady rhythm and no burst of speed as the club enters the rough.

Finally, keep the clubhead low to the ground and moving toward the target after the ball is gone (*above*). If the club stops right after impact, you know you've hit down too steeply.



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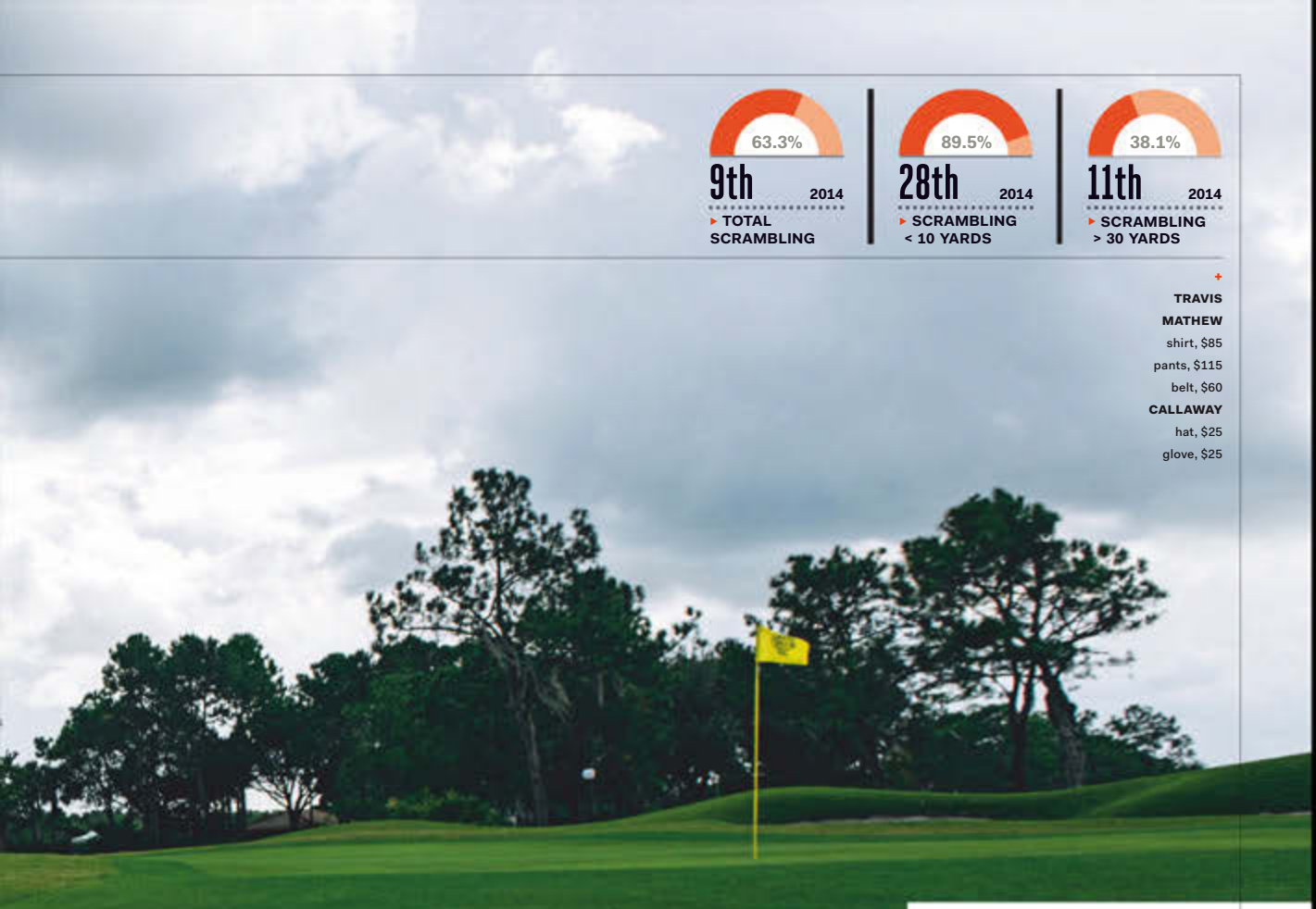
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TENSION PREVENTION
Keeping a light grip on the club helps prevent your hands from taking over the shot.
A CLEAN SWEEP
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KEEP IT TOGETHER
A narrow stance helps you stay centered as you swing, setting up solid contact.



63.3%
9th 2014
▸ TOTAL SCRAMBLING

89.5%
28th 2014
▸ SCRAMBLING < 10 YARDS

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THE NO-FRILLS PITCH SHOT

From 20 to 40 yards, my most reliable shot is one that doesn't require a lot of pre-swing adjustments or a fancy swing shape, yet it's versatile enough to handle most situations. It's a no-frills pitch shot, though there's a little more to it than meets the eye.

Start with a narrow, slightly open stance, your feet almost touching. That will help you feel centered and prevent you from leaning too far left or right, which is the worst mistake I see golfers make. Play the ball in the middle of your stance, and grip the club lightly. On the backswing, control the motion with your shoulders, and let your hands and arms simply go along for the ride.

Through impact, swing the clubhead toward the target and keep the face square. Let the loft on the face determine the shot's trajectory. Most important, sweep the ball off the turf, taking little to no divot (*left*). If you hit down sharply or try to help the ball into the air, you're going to have problems.

Chris Kirk has won three times on the PGA Tour.

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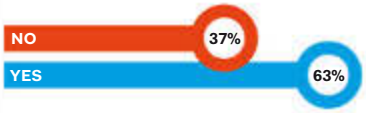
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Approach G8

On a tee shot with the wind helping, do you make any adjustments?

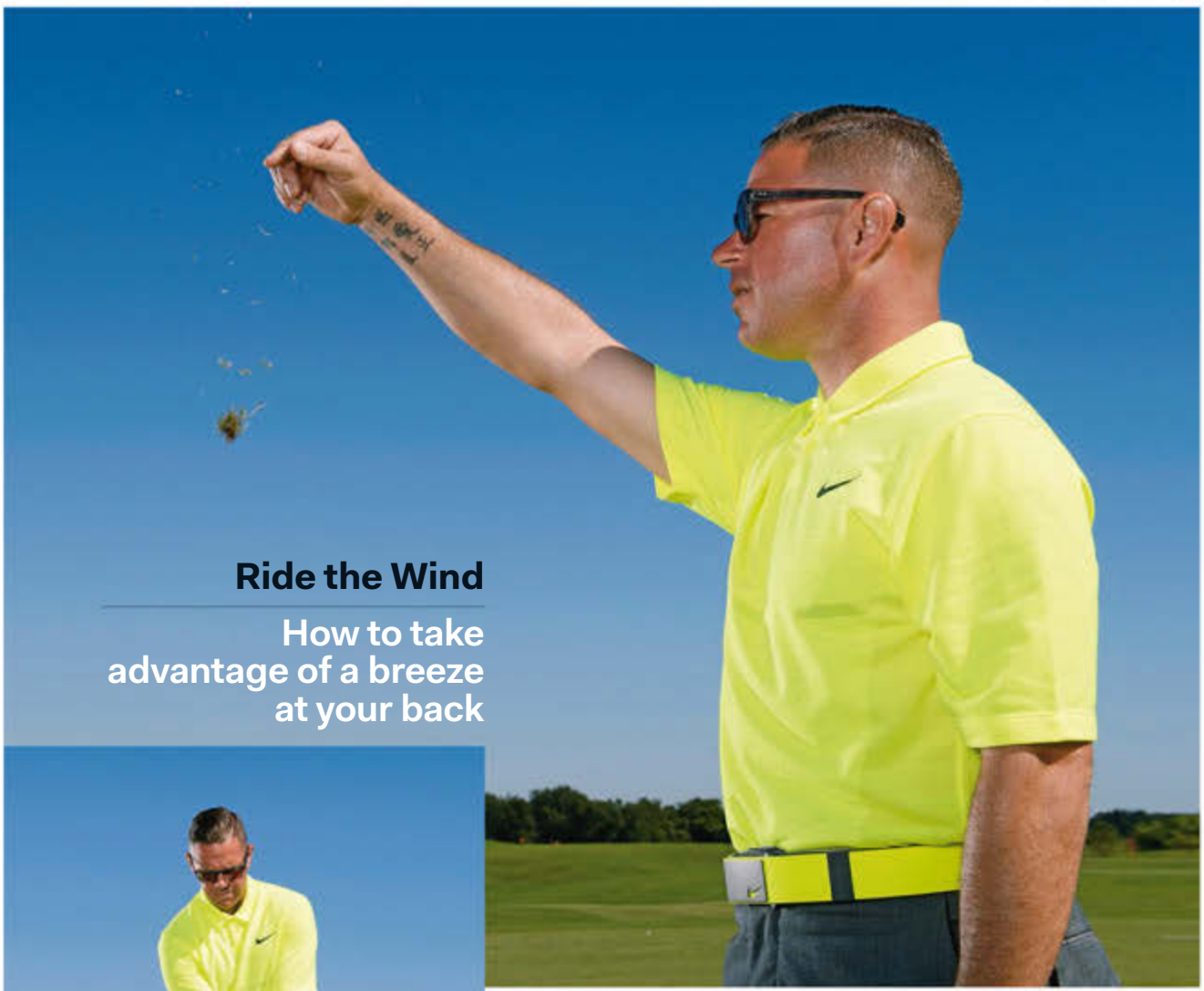


SOURCE: GOLF DIGEST READERS



Ride the Wind

How to take advantage of a breeze at your back





I don't know of any caddie-player team on the PGA Tour that competes without knowing two things: (1) The prevailing wind direction for the round and (2) the wind direction at any given moment. It's against the rules to use a compass during a round, but you can use a weather app on your phone to find out the wind speed and direction. Don't underestimate the importance of this in determining club selection and shot shape.

Although you might know what to do *into* the wind—take more club and swing easier—downwind shots tend to cause players fits, because the ball often reacts counter to what you might expect. Unless you hit a shot on a fairly high trajectory, it won't ride the wind. Instead, it will get knocked down because of a reduction in backspin, and the expected distance gains won't materialize.

To take advantage of a breeze at your back, first set up to hit a higher shot: Address the ball farther forward, and let your spine tilt away from the target a little (*left*). For this tee shot, I have the ball aligned with the heel of my front foot. You can see my shoulders are tilted back.

Even though your front shoulder will be much higher than your back shoulder, keep some weight on your front foot so you can shift toward the target on the downswing. To hit it higher, a good swing thought is: *Stay behind the ball.*

Sean Foley is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.

NIKE: SHIRT, $50, BELT, $50, SHOES, $170 • SEE: SUNGLASSES, $99 • BREITLING: WATCH

Photographs by J.D. Cuban



"I always played it smart here: middle of the green."

Small Wonder

The 12th hole at Augusta got my respect

This is one of the best—and also most dangerous—holes in golf. I love it because it makes you think and tempts you to try bolder shots than you should. It's not a particularly difficult hole in calm conditions, but the swirling wind is almost always a factor. You're playing a 155-yard shot, but with the water in front, you can make a big number. Like so many holes at the Masters, if you play to the center of the green, you'll usually have a reasonable birdie putt. I made a lot of birdies at Augusta by sinking 20-foot putts rather than firing at the flag. The 12th was no different.

—WITH ROGER SCHIFFMAN



A LITTLE SHORT IS OK

This is not a simple bunker shot, but it's better to be here than in the water or over the green, which is a difficult up-and-down because the green slopes away from you. You definitely don't want to be in those back bunkers.

DON'T GET SUCKERED

When the pin is here, best to play left of it. I liked to line up at the middle of the front bunker. I might fudge it a little right, but never right of the bunker. If you go there and come up short, you're down the bank and in the drink.

FINDING THE RIGHT STUFF

The key to this hole is having the right club in your hand. I never liked hitting a right-to-left shot into this green—too much risk of going over. I usually played a punch shot when the wind was blowing. Otherwise, it's a normal shot, but not right to left.

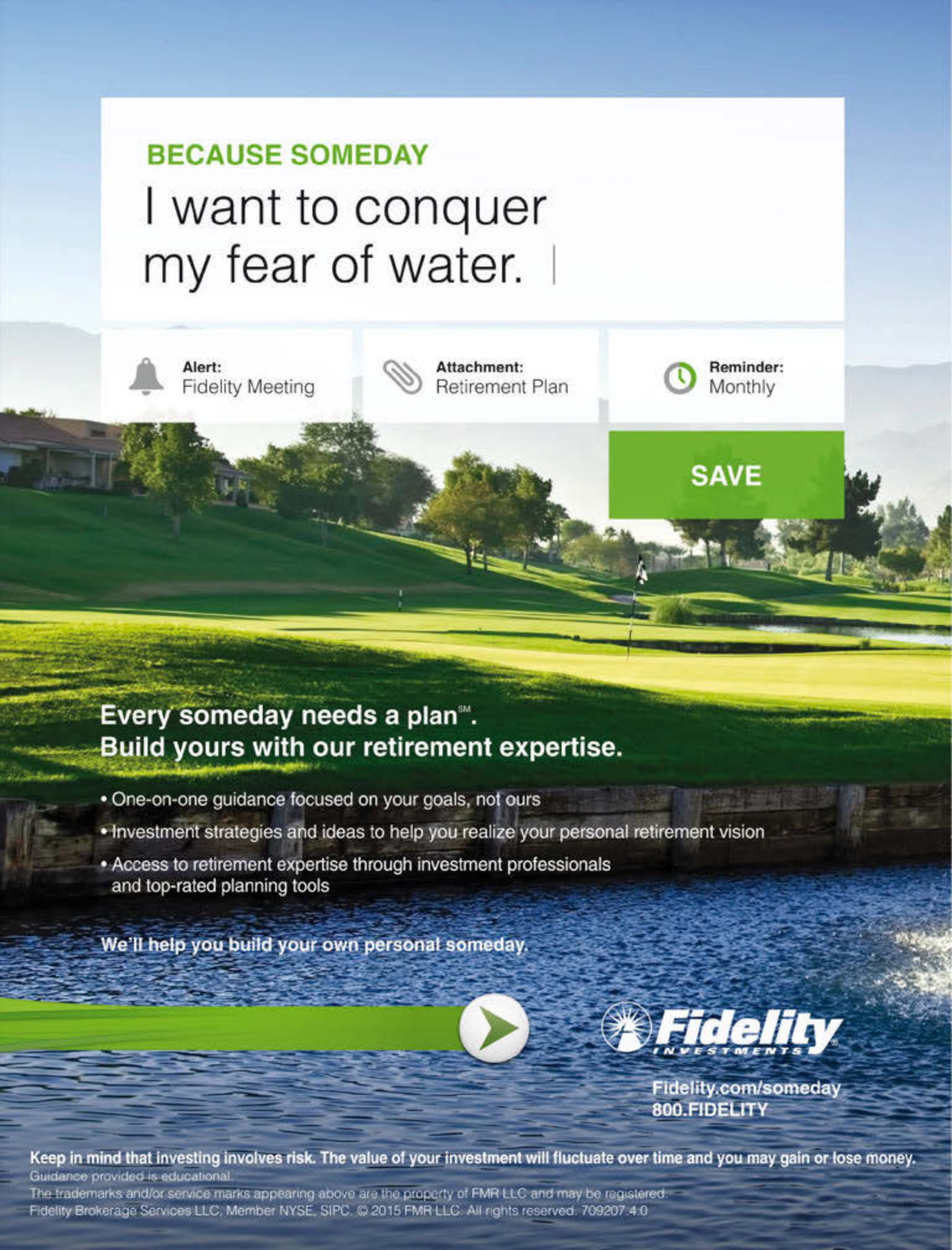
IT HAPPENED HERE

When bogey was a boost

In the final round of the 1986 Masters, I got on a roll starting on No. 9, birdieing three in a row. On 12, sticking with my usual strategy of not aiming at a flag on the right, I hit my tee shot a little long and to the left. I chipped to about six feet, but there was a spike mark in my line. Sure enough, I missed the putt. But making bogey actually fired me up. I knew I had to be aggressive the rest of the way. I birdied 13, eagled 15, then birdied 16 and 17 for a back-nine 30 and my sixth green jacket.

STEPHEN SZURLEJ

Illustration by Chris O'Riley


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Italy's Francesco Molinari is known for his accuracy, whether he's playing in the United States or on the European Tour, where he has spent most of his career. Witness his hole-in-one on the fan-frenzied 16th hole at the Waste Management Phoenix Open in January. But his teacher, Denis Pugh, says Molinari can add distance without sacrificing his precision.

"We looked at the stats and his abilities and determined he can't become one of the longest hitters on tour," Pugh says. "But he can definitely be the longest straight driver out there. As he plays a lot more in America this year, that's his goal."

How do they plan to achieve that goal? "First, by improving his dynamic balance," says Pugh, who's based outside of London. Molinari, a three-time winner in Europe, has been working on his core strength. Says Pugh: "This will allow him to store more power as he turns back and then unleash it through impact." Pugh says his student also has the mental strength. "He's a quiet guy, but that's deceiving. He's determined and focused on winning majors." Adding length to accuracy might be just what he needs.



Francesco Molinari

Adding power to a swing built on accuracy

NO WAGGLE

Francesco's ball-striking precision begins at address. Note the clubshaft is vertical, his head is well behind the ball, and his body is centered. Unlike most top players, he starts the swing from a still position. "We've tried to calm down his wrists," says his coach, Denis Pugh. "When he was young, he was very wristy. Not anymore."

STRETCH IT OUT

"There's very little lower-body movement halfway back," Pugh says. "I like that. But I'd like to see more stretch on the takeaway—more space between his left hand and right hip for a bigger arc and more distance." In Frame 3, Pugh would prefer less wrist hinge: "I want the shaft at 11 o'clock instead of 12," he says.

GREAT TRANSITION

In Frames 4 and 5, Molinari's positions are nearly ideal. "I love this change of direction," Pugh says. "His knees hardly move as he turns to the top, then he leads the downswing with his left knee and lower body. I want him to think of lateral motion toward the target as his focus on the downswing."

DRIVING ACCURACY (2014)



Molinari (11th)



Adilson da Silva (1st)

DRIVING DISTANCE (2014)



Molinari (127th)



Nicolas Colsaerts (1st)

GREENS IN REGULATION (2014)



Molinari (36th)



Thomas Aiken (1st)

SOURCE: EUROPEAN TOUR



MOVING FORWARD

Pugh says to compare the impact photo to the address photo: The shaft has returned to vertical, but almost everything else has changed. "The club is moving at 113 miles per hour, and his lower body has shifted toward the target," Pugh says. "He's unleashed the power he created in his change of direction."

A FULL RELEASE

Pugh marvels at Molinari's free-wheeling release of the club past impact. "There's no hint of flicking the wrists," he says. "This is why Francesco is so accurate off the tee and with his approach shots. His lower body is a picture of stability, and his clubshaft is pointing right out at the target."

STRESS-FREE FINISH

Molinari strikes a classic pose in the finish position. His right shoulder has rotated well past his left shoulder, and his back is straight. He has made a full shift to his front side, and is showing no strain. "This is a super example of a balanced swing that is stylishly efficient," Pugh says. "He could hold that finish forever."

PRO-FILE

FRANCESCO MOLINARI
32 / 5-foot-8
159 pounds
London

DRIVER
Nike Vapor Pro (current)

BALL
Nike RZN Black

+
NIKE shirt, $50, pants, $80, belt, $50, shoes, $220, hat, $30, glove, $19

Photographs by J.D. Cuban



"Great putters think alike: *This one's going in.*"

Shadow Putting

Don't get in your own way

Of all the silly excuses for missing putts, being distracted by your shadow has to be near the top. But it's a real thing that a lot of golfers struggle with. Be careful that it doesn't become a hang-up for you.

The good news is, your shadow's not there when you're reading a putt, so you should be able to get a clear line. That's the first key on short putts. Then, when you get over the ball, it's all about aiming the putterface on that line. I picture a trough three or four inches wide that runs to the hole. I know if I get my ball in that trough, it's got a good chance. Whatever you do, really focus on getting the face aimed precisely. Then settle into your stance, look once down the line to confirm, and go.

When you start rolling in putts, you'll find a use for your shadow: watching yourself make fist pumps.

Butch Harmon is based at Rio Secco Golf Club near Las Vegas.

BUTCH'S BASICS

On short putts, it's often your attitude that determines the outcome. Try to replace the doubt in your head with thoughts like *My aim is perfect* or *This one's going in*. Simple, but you'll be amazed how well you putt. I promise you, all good putters think they're making it.



ABOUT FACE

The best way to ignore your shadow is to focus all of your attention on aiming the face.

FOOTJOY: SHIRT, $72, PANTS, $85, SHOES, $180 • TITLEIST: HAT, $27 • ROLEX: WATCH • HOUSE OF FLEMING: BELT

Photograph by J.D. Cuban

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"Slicers hit pull-hooks when they feel like they're aimed right."



Why'd I Do That?

Water left, and you duck-hook

You've been piping your driver all day, but now you're facing a scary tee shot with water down the left side. As fast as you can say "quack," you duck-hook it into the drink. What just happened?

There are two types of severe misses to the left. The first one affects the 90 percent of golfers who usually play a pull-slice. The club comes from outside to in, but the face is normally open so the ball works back into play. With water on the left, these players try to start the ball farther right, but they instinctively fear going way right, so they spin the hips and shoulders left and release the club more. That sends the ball left. They need to trust their fade, maintain rhythm, and feel the lower body go toward the target, which drops the club on an inside path.

The other miss affects players who tend to hook or push the ball. With water left, the tendency is to aim and swing the club to the right. Under pressure, the body slows, the hands flip the club over, and the ball duck-hooks. They need to swing more down the target line, rotating the body to the left. This will quiet the hands and slow the face rotation to prevent a quick hook.



SEE NO WATER

If you're playing in a tournament, try to identify the dangerous tee shots during your practice round. Then, the night before you play, visualize over and over where you want to hit the ball. But the key comes during the round: Recall your visualization, trust it and swing. In your pre-shot routine, never look at the trouble. Focus on where you want the ball to land. Make the visual cue you rehearsed at night more important than the outcome.

—DR. BOB ROTELLA



LAIRD DUNKS IT AT THE LAST

Martin Laird took a three-stroke lead into the final round of the Waste Management Phoenix Open in February. After some shaky play down the stretch, he was a shot back of Brooks Koepka standing on the 18th tee, which features water down the left side. Laird's 5-wood tee shot hooked and never had a chance (*above*). The resulting double bogey let Koepka get his first PGA Tour win.

Rick Smith is a Golf Digest Teaching Professional.

ILLUSTRATION: BEN WISEMAN • LAIRD: SCOTT HALLERAN/GETTY IMAGES

Photograph by Andy Bridge/Getty Images

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Slide Rule

Play with a purpose from the bunkers

When amateurs are told they have to strike the sand behind the ball to get out of a greenside bunker, many interpret that to mean they should dig under the ball. As a result, they end up swinging too deeply into the sand, and the ball doesn't get out. You want your wedge to slide, not dig, through the sand. Follow these steps to play it correctly.

David Leadbetter operates 24 golf academies worldwide.

1. TURN THE FACE OPEN



▸ **To help your wedge glide through the sand instead of dig, open the face before gripping the club. Also, aim a couple of inches behind the ball. That's where you want to make contact with the sand.**

2. DON'T GO BACK SHORT



▸ **You need some rhythm and power to get the ball out, so take the club back fully. Don't worry that a big swing will send the ball over the green. Making contact with the heavy sand really deadens the shot.**

3. SPLASH THE SAND OUT



▸ **For the same reason you need a full backswing, you also need to feel like the club is accelerating through impact. Don't stop the club in the sand. A good swing thought is to try to splash the sand all the way to the hole.**

4. KEEP SOME KNEE FLEX



▸ **Resist the urge to lift your body to stop the clubhead from digging deeply into the sand. Instead, keep your knees flexed well past impact. The club will slide under the ball and pop it out, even with some backspin.**

ILLUSTRATIONS: TODD DETWILER (LEFT), ZOHAR LAZAR (TOP)

Photograph by Dom Furore at The Concession Golf Club, Bradenton, Fla.

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A **10-year** Augusta National member



Stay in Posture to Hit It Pure

If you lift up, you have to get back down

Even the best address position can get derailed by a common backswing mistake sent to me on Twitter all the time.

When you set up, you establish a certain amount of forward bend from your hips, which creates an angle between your spine and lower body. If you want to hit the ground in the right spot and get the right amount of it—two keys to hitting solid shots—you need to retain the posture you set at address all the way through impact.

Instead of turning the shoulders around the original spine angle, many amateur golfers stand up out of their posture and turn their shoulders on a flat plane (*above, left*). That kind of level turn tends to move the arms too far to the inside and makes it difficult to get back down to the ball.

The more you can rotate around a consistent spine axis, turning your left shoulder under your right (*above, right*), the more consistent contact and ball speed you'll be able to produce.

Hank Haney is based at the Hank Haney Golf Ranch, Lewisville, Texas. To get fixed in Golf Digest, send Hank your swing on Twitter: @HankDHaney.

ILLUSTRATION: ZOHAR LAZAR • ADIDAS: SHIRT, $75, PANTS, $90, BELT, $50, SHOES, $120 • TAYLORMADE: HAT, $28, GLOVE, $20

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"You gotta ask my caddie for my distances. He tracks them for me!"



CARLOS ORTIZ

AGE 23

BORN Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

RESIDES Dallas

STORY Won three times on the Web.com Tour last year, earning $515,403 and his PGA Tour card for 2015.

NOD TO MY COUNTRY
My irons, wedges and putter have white, red and green paintfills inspired by the flag of Mexico. I make sure they're placed in my bag so the colors alternate. I grew up playing at Guadalajara Country Club, where Lorena Ochoa worked on her game. I'm honored to represent my country just like she did.

LIFE MOVES SO FAST
I've learned that golf is the same, at any level. It might seem crazy to be playing on the PGA Tour, just two years out of college [University of North Texas], but as long as I shoot low scores, I'm going to do OK out here. That's why I've stuck with some of the clubs I've used since college. It can be tempting to change, but I won't as long as they keep working.

—WITH STEPHEN HENNESSEY

DRIVER

SPECS Ping G30, 9.75° loft, Ping Tour 65 shaft, X-flex, 45¼ inches, D-3 swingweight

My go-to shot off the tee is a fade. The G30 lets me work the ball without creating too much spin. Even if I miss with this, it's going far and in play.

FAIRWAY WOOD

SPECS Ping Anser 3-wood, 14.5° loft, Ping TFC800 shaft, S-flex, 42½ inches

I can launch this high with some spin to hold a firm green if I need to. But off the tee, there's little spin. This is a hard club for me to change because I trust it.





Call it "feng shui"
When I was in China in 2011 for the World University Games, a girl gave me this good-luck charm. Our Mexican team won the bronze medal, which was so cool, so I've kept it in my bag ever since.

IRONS

SPECS Ping S55, 3-iron through pitching wedge, 1° upright, True Temper Dynamic Gold X100 shafts, Ping iD8-White +1 grips

I started playing Ping irons at age 16, and I've switched over to each new iron set they've come out with. It seems like I can control spin and launch the lower irons high, even in windy conditions.

HYBRID

SPECS Ping Anser, 18° loft, Aldila Tour Blue 105 shaft, X-flex, 40¾ inches, 1° flat

I've been playing with this hybrid (and my 3-wood) since college. I can hit this 2-iron replacement into par 5s yet also play recovery shots out of the rough.

WEDGES

SPECS Ping Glide prototype (52˚ and 58˚), 12˚ bounce, True Temper Dynamic Gold S400 shafts

I like having these new grooves, and I think the extra bounce on these clubs has helped me hit better shots from difficult lies around the greens.

CLUB	YDS*
DRIVER	295
3-WOOD	265
2-HYBRID	245
3-IRON	225
4-IRON	215
5-IRON	205
6-IRON	190
7-IRON	177
8-IRON	165
9-IRON	153
PW	140
GW	125
LW	100

*carry distance



My military medallion
Last year, I played in a pro-am with a U.S. Army investigator. He gave me this badge, and then immediately I won in Portland. I wouldn't say I'm overly superstitious. It's more of a nice reminder of good times.

Ditched the deuces
I play the Titleist Pro V1x, but never a No. 2 ball. In European Q school, I lost two balls on the first two holes. I had a local caddie who swore No. 2s were unlucky. Sure enough, we switched to a No. 3, and I made five straight birdies. I've never played No. 2s since.





PUTTER

SPECS Ping Scottsdale Piper C custom putter, 34 inches, 4˚ loft, 21˚ lie angle, 364 grams (headweight), Ping PP58 midsize grip

In fifth grade, I started using a putter with a plumbers-neck hosel. The guys at Ping welded a custom hosel onto this to match the look I like.



Going really, really low!
This is a picture of me scuba diving on a vacation to the Bahamas with my family. (That's me holding the camera, and my dad behind me.) We were right next to some crazy-big sharks. We enjoy fishing, too. I have tons of photos of me with huge tuna that I've caught.



Mean business on the green
I wanted to have the mascot of my college—North Texas—represented on my bag. So this putter cover is important to me. College golf was huge for my growth as a player.

EQUIPMENT: J.D. CUBAN • CARLOS ORTIZ: JEFF GROSS/GETTY IMAGES • SCUBA DIVING: COURTESY OF ORTIZ



"Take 30 minutes to warm up, 15 short game, 15 full swing."

Rehearse Your Round

Practice the shots you'll need that day

When you warm up before you play, do you hit shots with a purpose? That is, once you've loosened up, do you practice the shots that give you the most trouble on the course you're about to play? The right prep will help your scoring.

Here's an example as I look forward to playing in my 42nd Masters. Augusta National is very long, and I know I'll have to hit a number of hybrid clubs on approach shots. So I'll practice hard with my hybrids to make sure I have them under control and can hit them a little higher than normal to hold Augusta's speedy greens. In my warm-up, I'll try some hybrids until I hit a few I really like. Then when I face one on the course, in my mind I know I've already done it.

Another shot that is always critical for me is the tee shot on the 12th hole—the wonderful par 3 that requires precise distance control. On the Augusta range (*below*), I'll take my 7-iron, visualizing the shot I want to hit. Then I'll make sure I hit at least one great 7-iron so that when I'm on that 12th tee for real, I'm confident. —WITH NICK SEITZ

ELEMENTARY WATSON

Many of you don't allow enough time to prepare properly for a round. I see a lot of players rush through their warm-ups, then need several holes to get going. I'd urge you to take at least 30 minutes warming up, the first 15 working on short-game feel, the second 15 hitting balls—with a purpose!

Excerpted from the DVD "Lessons of a Lifetime II," by Tom Watson.



Photograph by Ben Lowy


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Life



Free Swingin'

X-GOLF

TV's Rockmond Dunbar is ready for a game

"I'm hoping I get asked to play a golfer. . . this brother will be prepared."



I was in Canada about 10 years ago shooting episodes of Showtime's "Soul Food." I had just played golf and broke 90 for the first time. I was so psyched when I left the course—Lionhead Golf Club in Ontario—and went back to the apartment where I was staying. I had two full sets of clubs with me, and I left them in my truck. The next day, I came out to the parking lot, and the back window was smashed, and my clubs were gone. I can't tell you how painful that was. I never saw them again, and to this day I can't bear to replace them.

Now when I play, I just rent or borrow clubs—like when I'm doing celebrity golf events. I'm about a 20-handicap, and I know my game could be a lot better if I had clubs and more time to play. Between doing "The Mentalist" on CBS and spending time with my wife, Maya, and our baby girl, Berkeley, I don't have as much time to play as I'd like.

Fortunately, Maya bought me a new driver and hitting net for the back yard, and I'm starting to get back in the golf groove. She said she wants to start playing, so we're going to take lessons together.

Here's the thing about golf: When you're filming TV shows, it's a team environment. But golf? It's just you, your swing, your skill, your patience. I really love that part of it. I'm hoping I get asked to play a golfer in a movie or show. Let me tell you, this brother will be prepared before we start shooting. I will look better than Tiger Woods.

—INTERVIEWED BY RON KASPRISKE

ABOUT ROCKMOND ▸ The 42-year-old native of the San Francisco Bay Area just finished his role as Dennis Abbott on "The Mentalist." He's also known for recurring roles on "Sons of Anarchy," "Prison Break," "The Game" and "Soul Food." Dunbar began playing golf in 1998 when he moved to Los Angeles. "My friends from college, we'd all play [Rancho Park] over on Pico Boulevard. I was unemployed. We all were. It was a way to pass time until one of us got a job. But now I'm hooked on it."

Photographs by Chris McPherson

A **15-year** Augusta National member



Splash Down

Test your knowledge of water hazards

1 A tiny portion of your ball is touching a water-hazard margin. Is it in the hazard?

2 If part of your ball is in a water hazard, can you ground your club behind the portion outside the hazard?

3 Your shot slices into a creek defined as a lateral water hazard (with red stakes or lines). If you drop within two club-lengths of where your ball entered, trees will prevent a clear shot. But there's nothing in the way on the opposite side of the hazard. Can you drop there?

4 Heavy rain has raised the water level in a hazard to a point where it has extended past its margins. If your ball comes to rest in water outside of the margins, can you take relief without penalty?

5 Your approach shot clears a water hazard (identified by yellow), lands on the green but rolls back into the hazard. Can you drop on the green side?

6 If you hit into a water hazard, can you play a second ball as a provisional?

7 Once you drop under one option of a water-hazard rule, may you pick up the ball without penalty and choose another option under Rule 26?

8 If you make a stroke at your ball in a water hazard, but don't hit it out, do you have further options besides playing it as it lies?

9 Do you have to identify your ball in a water hazard to proceed under its rules?

10 Your tee shot rolls into a nearly dry ditch that has no water-hazard markings. Do you get relief without penalty?



Photograph by Cy Cyr

ANSWERS

1. Yes. It's in when any part touches it. (DEFINITIONS)

2. Yes, but it's a penalty if you ground your club in the hazard before making the stroke. (RULE 13-4)

3. Yes. With a lateral hazard, you may find the point on the opposite margin of the hazard that is equidistant to the hole with the point where your ball entered. Then drop within two club-lengths of that point, no closer to the hole. (RULE 26-1c)

4. Yes. This is casual water. (RULE 25-1b; DECISION 25/2)

5. No. Under a one-stroke penalty, you may drop on the side of the hazard from where you just hit, on a line drawn from the hole through that spot where the ball last entered the water hazard. Or you can simply replay the shot. (RULE 26-1)

6. No. Any second ball would be considered in play under penalty of stroke and distance. (RULES 27-1, 27-2; DECISION 27-2a/2)

7. No. Once a ball is dropped, it's in play. You may change your option before dropping. (DECISIONS 25-1b/9, 24-2b/5)

8. Yes. With a one-stroke penalty, you can proceed under any of the rule's options available to you before you hit from the water hazard. (RULE 26-2)

9. No. If you know or are virtually certain it's in, proceed under water-hazard rules. Note: Just hearing or seeing a splash isn't enough evidence. (DECISION 26-1/1)

10. No. A ditch is defined as a water hazard regardless of the depth of its water or whether it is marked as a hazard. (DEFINITIONS, DECISION 26/3)

ILLUSTRATION: ZOHAR LAZAR


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"The first time I played with Tiger, I shot a thousand."



Undercover Tour Pro

Being paired with Tiger: It's a circus, good and bad

IT'S A STRANGE EXPERIENCE TO BE followed by 2,500 people and be completely ignored. The crowd only cares what he does. Except for maybe 15 big names, this is what you have to accept playing in Tiger's group. Spectators are already pushing ahead as you take your stance, and you know the stampede is going to triple in volume the moment your club strikes the ball. You're part of a moving stadium, and people are playing full contact to get in position to watch his next shot. My wife won't go to the course if I'm paired with him. Though she can watch on TV because I'm guaranteed airtime.

As overwhelming as it can be, Big Cat does everything in his power to protect you. He'll never tap in if you have a three-footer. If he did, he knows the crowd would motor to the next tee, and you'd be left to putt in the wake. If he's away by a small margin on the green, he'll invite you to play first, even if it means you'll be standing in his through line on the other side of the cup. By no means does he rush you, but he's very aware how his crowd moves, and he looks for ways to shepherd you. If he drains a bomb, he'll always wait by the edge of the green rather than head to the next tee. I'm not going to name names, but there are a number of marquee players who don't exhibit that courtesy.

Tiger gets a lot of flak for cursing and slamming his clubs. It's true he's got one of the dirtier mouths out here, but next to winning, there's no better feeling than when he lays out some profanity in praise of your shot. "That was hit ----ing solid," or even something more creative. In fact, when it comes to wording compliments with precise recognition of the caliber of the shot just played, Tiger is the best there is. He chats, and then when it's time for you or him to play, he stops. He's perfect. Sergio claiming that Tiger once pulled a headcover early on purpose to excite the crowd was a ridiculous accusation. If Tiger weren't so highly sensitive about managing noise, things like that would happen a dozen times every round.

Certain big stars will turn up their noses at you. Whether it's gamesmanship or they just want to focus, I don't know, but I've been in pairings where the guy didn't say 10 words to me the entire round. The first time I played with Tiger, I shot a thousand. I was a nobody, hadn't won a tournament yet, and he couldn't have been nicer.

The next time I was paired with Tiger, I shot 68 to his 67. The key to playing well with him is to embrace the positives. My favorite benefit is what we call "Tiger Rough." When you've got 2,500 fans on a hole, the rough gets tamped down for you, and depending on its resiliency, maybe the two groups directly behind you. A lot of fans don't realize how much better Tiger's lies typically are when he's off the fairway. It's not much, but it's enough to matter.

You also have to appreciate the chance to see up close what you lack. Tiger has physical attributes I'll never possess, but there are other things that have made him better than everybody else. His attention to detail with shot strategy, his rhythm, how he walks with confidence, and on and on.

In the handful of rounds I've played with him, I've never had the lower score. I hope I get another chance soon. Who cares if he's over the hill? Be a good story to tell my grandkids.

—WITH MAX ADLER

Illustration by Eddie Guy

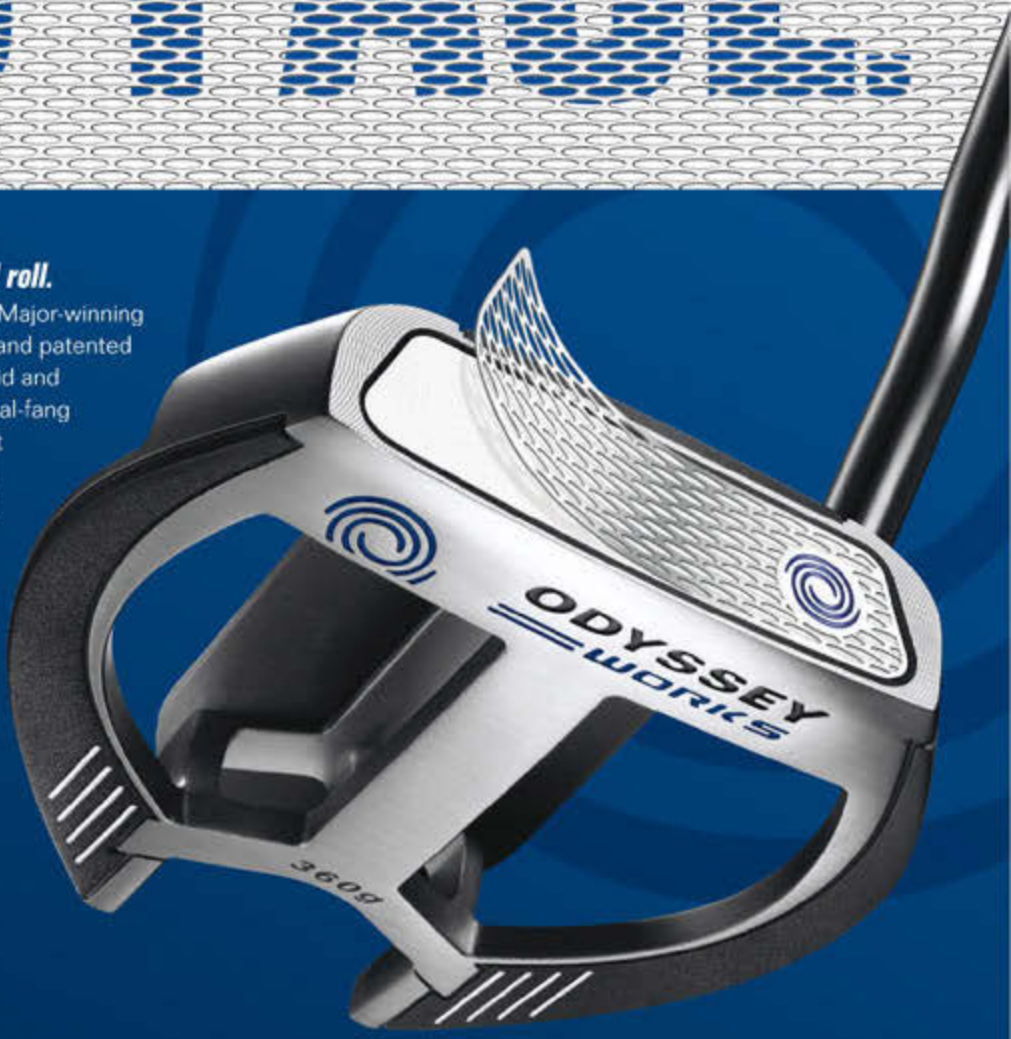
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ODYSSEY
#1 PUTTER IN GOLF.

"We get spoiled on tour. That first week, I got a Benz with 23 miles on it. Not bad!"

Justin Thomas

Watch out for this big-hitting rookie

Before this PGA Tour season, Justin Thomas made a list of seemingly lofty goals. He wanted to be in contention consistently, win a tournament and play in the Tour Championship. After three top 10s in his first eight events, the question might be, did he underestimate his capabilities? At 143 pounds, Thomas is playing big. And not just on the leader board. He's crushing it off the tee, averaging over 300 yards. The Goshen, Ky., native has been on an upward trajectory since he was player of the year as a freshman at Alabama. He turned pro in 2013 and earned his PGA Tour card after a strong 2014 on the Web.com Tour. For his debut at the Frys.com Open in Napa, Calif., in October, we had a photographer follow Thomas to get his impressions of tour life.

—INTERVIEWED BY STEPHEN HENNESSEY

1 That's my mom, Jani, hanging with me at our hotel. She hates following online, so she travels with me a lot. She'll even come to dinner with me and some of the other guys.

2 I'm not big into sightseeing. Everyone rags on me for that. But we did it in San Francisco. We hit the Golden Gate Bridge and got great clam chowder at Ferry Building Marketplace.

3 The perks on tour are no joke. On the Web.com Tour, you get a courtesy car each week. That's me and a two-door Mercedes-Benz I got in Napa. It went *crazy* fast. We all got bottles of wine, too.

4 I've been dreaming about being on the PGA Tour forever. So I don't mind doing interviews and different obligations. We get to do cool stuff outside the ropes. Like in Vegas, Colt Knost and I played Shadow Creek earlier in the week. Place is legit.

5 To be honest, the Frys was a blur. I played five straight weeks to finish the Web.com Tour season, so I didn't prepare well and missed the cut. But I flew to my new place near the Bear's Club in Jupiter, Fla., to practice for a week. I got refreshed and had a T-4 in my third event. That was a lesson in the grind of the tour schedule. I've followed that with two more top-10s in January.



+
POLO GOLF
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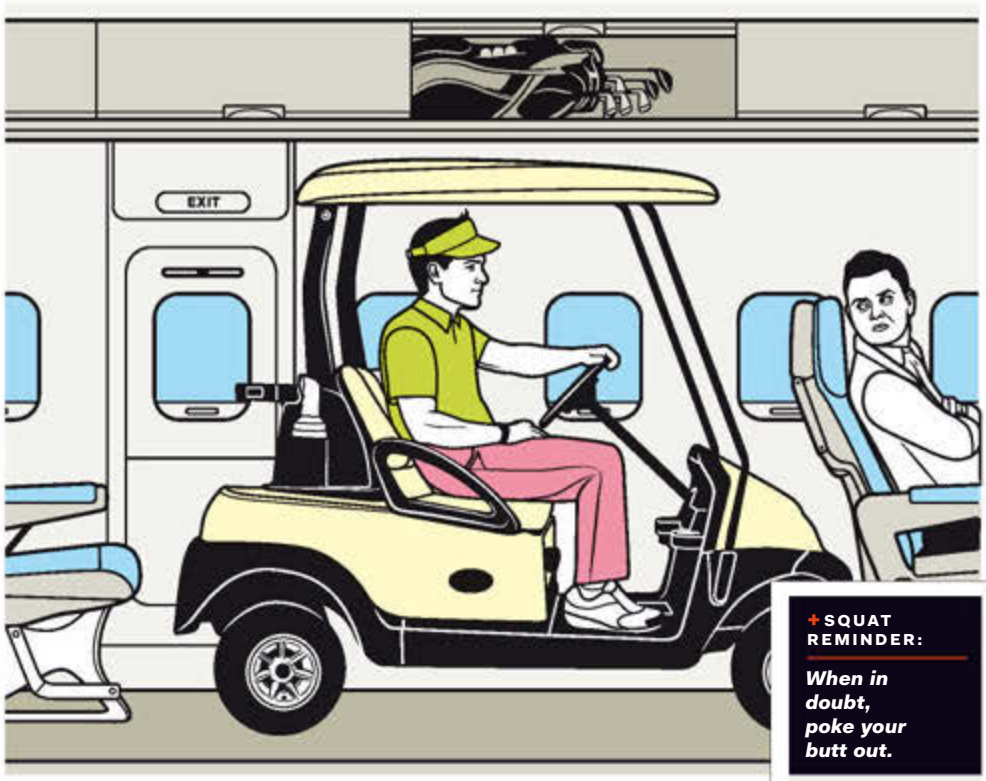
Photographs by J.D. Cuban

The last thing you want to do is spend half your trip in a sleep-deprived fog.

Flight Plans

How to keep jet lag from ruining your next golf trip

NASA scientists estimate that for every time zone you cross in your travels, you need an equal number of days in your new location to recover from jet lag. Think how that affects Californians going to Ireland for a dream golf vacation. The last thing you want to do is spend half your trip in a sleep-deprived fog. Dr. Ara Suppiah, who works with PGA Tour players Henrik Stenson Justin Rose, Steve Stricker, Ian Poulter and Hunter Mahan, gave us tips for minimizing jet lag's impact. —RON KASPRISKE



▸BEFORE TAKEOFF

1. Book a flight that lands in the daytime, morning preferred. It's like getting a bonus day to overcome the time difference.

2. Don't change your sleeping habits before your trip to get in sync with the new time zone. Sleep normally.

3. Two days before flying, boost your immune system with a daily dose of vitamin C (1,000 milligrams) and vitamin D (5,000 milligrams).

4. Over 40? Consider taking a baby aspirin to avoid a blood clot from prolonged sitting.



ISTOCKPHOTO

▸ON THE FLIGHT



1. Drink plenty of water. Dehydration compounds the effects of jet lag.

2. Take a prescription diazepam (Valium) or an over-the-counter diphenhydramine (Benadryl or Sominex). It will relax your muscles and help you sleep.

3. Avoid sugary food and drinks, including alcohol. Blood-sugar spikes increase inflammation and disturb sleep cycles.

4. Need to have a drink? Then eat peanuts (unsalted, if possible). Nuts slow down the absorption of alcohol in the bloodstream.

▸AFTER LANDING

1. Glimpse directly toward the sun at dawn or dusk. Doing so will increase activity in the pineal gland, helping regulate melatonin (the sleep hormone).

2. Drink a liter of cold water with a squeezed lemon (skin included). This alkaline mixture helps rid the body of acidity and germs.

3. Exercise, but avoid a big workout. Try walking barefoot on grass or sand for 30 minutes to reduce lingering in-flight stress.

4. Take one more Valium or Benadryl when you go to sleep on the first night of the trip.



+SQUAT REMINDER:

When in doubt, poke your butt out.

▸ To correctly perform a basic squat, your torso should line up roughly parallel to the shin bones as you drop into your available range of motion, says Golf Digest fitness advisor Ralph Simpson. "If the torso is too upright, you can't produce a lot of power or have much mobility. You're also at a greater risk for injury. So remember: *Poke your butt out*."



Illustrations by Todd Detwiler

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"Our profession has come a long way since the days of 'Caddyshack.' "

The War on Bugs

Do superintendents go too far to protect your course?

There are enemies out to destroy our golf courses, all sorts of critters that like to gobble the grass, usually from the bottom up, and all sorts of diseases that can quickly move in on a hot, humid day and wipe out entire greens. The industry has developed low-impact programs to combat these forces, but sometimes the only solution is a chemical one. So we asked our panel of expert superintendents: Should we be concerned for our health if we see the maintenance crew—sometimes dressed like they just came from a lunar landing—spraying the golf course on the day we play? —RON WHITTEN

The answer is no. The products are applied by state-certified applicators using properly calibrated equipment in accordance with the product and local, state and federal laws. However, some people know they're allergic to certain chemicals. Those golfers should check with the superintendent or golf shop to find out what products, if any, are being applied that day. Then decide if they want to play.

JAMES RONEY JR.
SAUCON VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB, BETHLEHEM, PA.

Almost every product that the superintendent uses is considered safe once it has dried on the turf.

FRED GEHRISCH
HIGHLANDS (N.C.) FALLS COUNTRY CLUB

Many times they're spraying wetting agents, which are nothing more than highly refined soaps.

MATT SHAFFER
MERION GOLF CLUB, ARDMORE, PA.

Our profession has come a long way since the days of "Caddyshack" and Carl Spackler. Although I must admit there is a little bit of Carl in all of us. We are stewards of the environment and don't want to impact wildlife or our customers in any way. Not to mention that the EPA registers all chemicals before they can be legally used on a golf course.

JOSH HEPTIG
SAN LUIS OBISPO (CALIF.) COUNTY GOLF COURSES

Aware? Yes. Concerned? No. Golf superintendents take great care in selecting products that have a low risk to golfers, workers and the environment. Still, use common sense. Avoid contact between a golf ball and your mouth. Avoid placing cigarettes or cigars on the ground. Avoid wiping your face with a towel that you've placed on a putting green.

PAUL CARTER
BEAR TRACE AT HARRISON BAY, TENN.

Often the applicator is wearing a suit simply to avoid getting his clothing discolored. As for chemicals, I'll share what Michigan State biology professor Dr. Joseph Vargas said: The drugs we call medicines are really human pesticides. It doesn't matter if a bacterium or fungus is attacking a human or a plant; if you're going to control it, you have to use a chemical to kill it. His point is, if we called fungicides, herbicides and pesticides "golf-course medicines," we'd look at them differently.

RUSS MYERS
LOS ANGELES COUNTRY CLUB

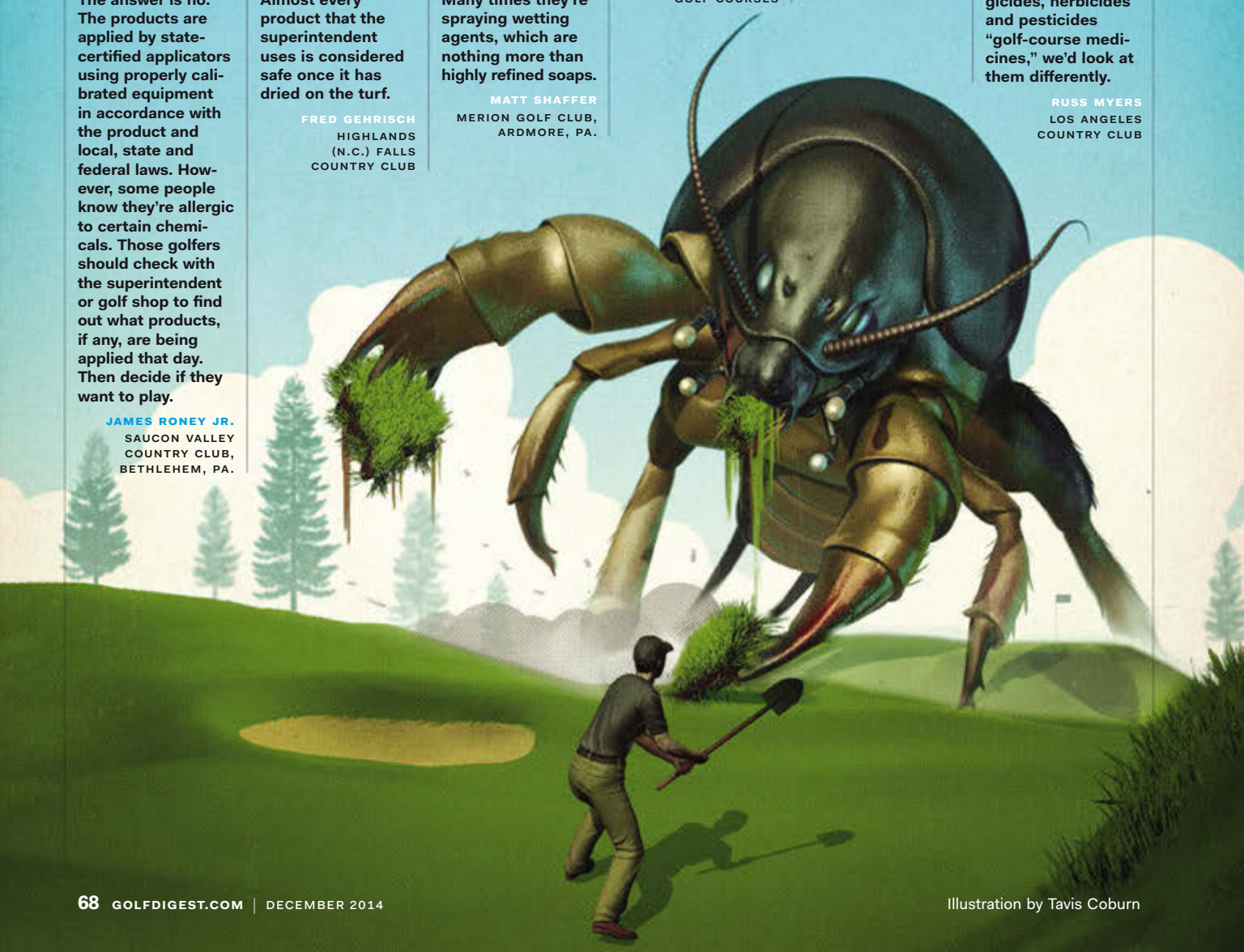


Illustration by Tavis Coburn



Camilo Villegas
AGgreenlabel.com

AG
GREEN LABEL

"They were able to increase revenue without harming the experience. . . . It's all pure."



Making Big Bucks, Spending Big Bucks

How the Masters turns a $29M profit

BY RON SIRAK

There are two types of people on the commercial side of golf: Those who do business with Augusta National Golf Club and the Masters, and those who want to do business with the most valuable, lucrative—and private—property in the game. As a result, no one wants to be caught talking about the club or the tournament. But discussions with those who understand the business and Augusta National reveal this picture: The Masters makes a lot of money, leaves perhaps even more on the table, spends a lot of money to make its tournament better, and gives away a lot to help grow the game. In all, the Masters will generate about $115 million in revenue this year, according to Golf Digest reporting, more than a five-fold increase from the $22 million the magazine estimated in 1997 for the previous year's Masters. And that $115 million in revenue could translate to a profit of almost $30 million, up from $7 million in our 1997 report.

Illustrations by Michael Waraksa


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Av.analysis 12 fl oz, 96 cals, 3.2g carbs, < 1g protein, 0.0g fat



From the Masters' beginning in 1934 under Bob Jones and Clifford Roberts, the focus of the tournament has been to provide the best experience possible for the players and spectators. From the absence of corporate logos to limiting the number of people inside the ropes, the Masters is perhaps the last major sporting event left where the emphasis is solely on the game. But since taking over as chairman in 2006, Billy Payne has non-intrusively yet dramatically increased revenue and expanded ways in which the club gives back to the game.

"What Billy Payne has done is incredible," said one source involved in sports marketing. "As the commercialization of sports expanded, through great discipline and vision they were able to increase revenue without harming the experience. People want that Masters experience. They want to hear the roars. There are no logos anywhere. It's all pure."

The price of being on property went up this year for the second time since 2012. But after a $75 increase in 2015, to $325, for a badge that gains access to the four competitive rounds, the Masters is still one of the great bargains in sports. Tickets for this year's Super Bowl ranged from $800 to $1,900, and season-ticket holders for the Kansas City Royals were able to buy 2014 World Series tickets for $100 to $420 per game. On the secondary market, four-day badges for this year's Masters were starting at $5,088 on StubHub, the $65 Wednesday practice-round tickets were at least $925, and a one-day Sunday pass was priced from $1,600.

Those prices have grabbed the attention of Augusta National officials, and they're doing something about it. "They're buying up the weekly badges on the black market, then dividing them into daily badges," said a source familiar with the brisk secondary business that transpires on Washington Road the week of the tournament. "Just anecdotally, it startles me how many people I speak with who are at the Masters for the first time. These are clearly not badge holders."

Where do those black-market tickets that Augusta National is buying go? Some most certainly go to those who spend $6,000 to $7,500 a week for access to Berckmans Place, a posh, 100,000-square-foot entertainment facility next to the fifth fairway that opened in 2013. The eye-popping party place has five restaurants, replicas of the seventh, 14th and 16th greens, and a merchandise store with items not available to the public. Berckmans Place comfortably entertains about 2,000 people, which means it could generate more than $12 million in revenue, not including merchandise sales.

Augusta National does not release Masters attendance, but if you add that $12 million to the estimated 40,000 Thursday-Sunday patron badges sold at $325 each ($13 million) and the estimated 150,000 practice-round badges split Monday through Wednesday for $65 each ($9.75 million), you'd have $34.75 million in ticket revenue.

That figure stood at $6 million in our 1997 report, when the four-day badge was $100, practice-round tickets ranged from $16 to $21 and Berckmans Place did not exist. Let's assume the 310,000 patrons for the week spend $25 each on concessions—remember, this is a place where you can get a $3 beer and a $1.75 sandwich—and that puts another $7.75 million in the till.

Let's say the 40,000 four-day badge holders and the 150,000 daily practice-round ticket holders each spend $250 for merchandise—many people come to Augusta National with a shopping list for family and friends—and that's $47.5 million, a huge jump from the estimated $9 million in gross sales from our 1997 report. But back then there were only 13 cash registers. Now there are dozens that move with blinding efficiency. Add about $25 million from international television rights—we'll address the break-even domestic TV rights in a moment—and the total take from the tournament approaches $115 million.

The Masters on pay-per-view? "If they did, they could get $100 for the weekend and get two million to three million buys. Do the math on that."

WALKING AWAY FROM BIGGER MONEY

But think of the money Masters officials are choosing not to pursue. They could probably triple the ticket prices and still sell out. (A waiting list for weekly badges opened in 1972 and closed in 1978 before briefly reopening in 2000.) The concessions are likely run on a break-even basis—or even at a loss. And imagine how much more they could make if they opened an online store to augment the merchandise pavilion. "Can you even imagine there being an online store?" says a source who runs other tournaments, laughing with incredulity. "We'd all chuckle."

But nowhere is Augusta National showing more restraint than with its domestic TV rights. This is the 60th consecutive year CBS has broadcast the Masters on a one-year contract, an arrangement that began in 1956. ESPN has had the weekday cable rights since 2008 on the same basis.

"The way the Masters TV deal is constructed is still shrouded in mystery," says a source in the broadcasting business. "The deal changed a little bit when Billy came in as chairman, bringing in a small rights fee, but neither CBS nor Augusta National makes money on the deal."

Another source, also in the broadcast business, explains it this way:

"After the Masters, CBS sends an invoice to Augusta National, and they check it out and get the money from their corporate partners to cover production costs," says the source.

That means that IBM, AT&T and Mercedes-Benz pay about $6 million to $8 million each in exchange for four minutes of advertising time per hour—about one-third of the commercial interruptions of other sporting events. Rolex and UPS are the corporate partners for the international broadcast.

"If they ever opened up the [domestic TV] bidding, it would

(*please turn to page 171*)

RFT DriveGuard.com

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Special Forces

Get the right style of driver for your game

It's too easy to assume that all of today's adjustable drivers can be tweaked to fit any player. Fact is, certain kinds of drivers—maybe even some that aren't adjustable—will work better for your swing than others. For example, a driver with offset or a closed-face angle might help squelch your slice more than some clubheads with adjustable weights. A lightweight driver (about 300 grams or less) is going to be easier for slow-speed players to swing faster. And for the fastest swings, a driver designed to yield extremely low spin helps squeeze out a few extra yards. The more you know what you want your tee ball to do, the easier it'll be to find a driver that does it. Here are five to add to your search.



1

COBRA
FLY-Z XL

▸ It's amazing how much farther you hit it when you're not slicing shots into the trees. The offset provides more time to square the face, and extra mass in the back gets the ball in the air fast.

PRICE $280

2

BRIDGESTONE
J815

▸ Those ribs across the bottom stabilize the head and help shots fly farther with less spin. The extra thin crown helps, too. Extra weight in the heel builds in a little more draw.

PRICE $400

3

PING
G30 LS TEC

▸ Too often drivers billed as "low spin" sacrifice off-center hit stability. This design mirrors the forgiveness of the original G30 with the consistent spin reduction that players with fast swings need.

PRICE $350

4

TAYLORMADE
AEROBURNER

▸ You want the ball to go faster, so this driver helps in three ways: It's lighter, its sleek head is more aerodynamically efficient, and its face gets extra flex from the largest sole slot in company history.

PRICE $300

5

CALLAWAY
XR PRO

▸ By using a light composite, the crown rises in an aerodynamic curve but still keeps weight low. That means this compact head takes off more spin, which is ideal for high-speed swings.

PRICE $400

Photograph by Benjamin Alsop


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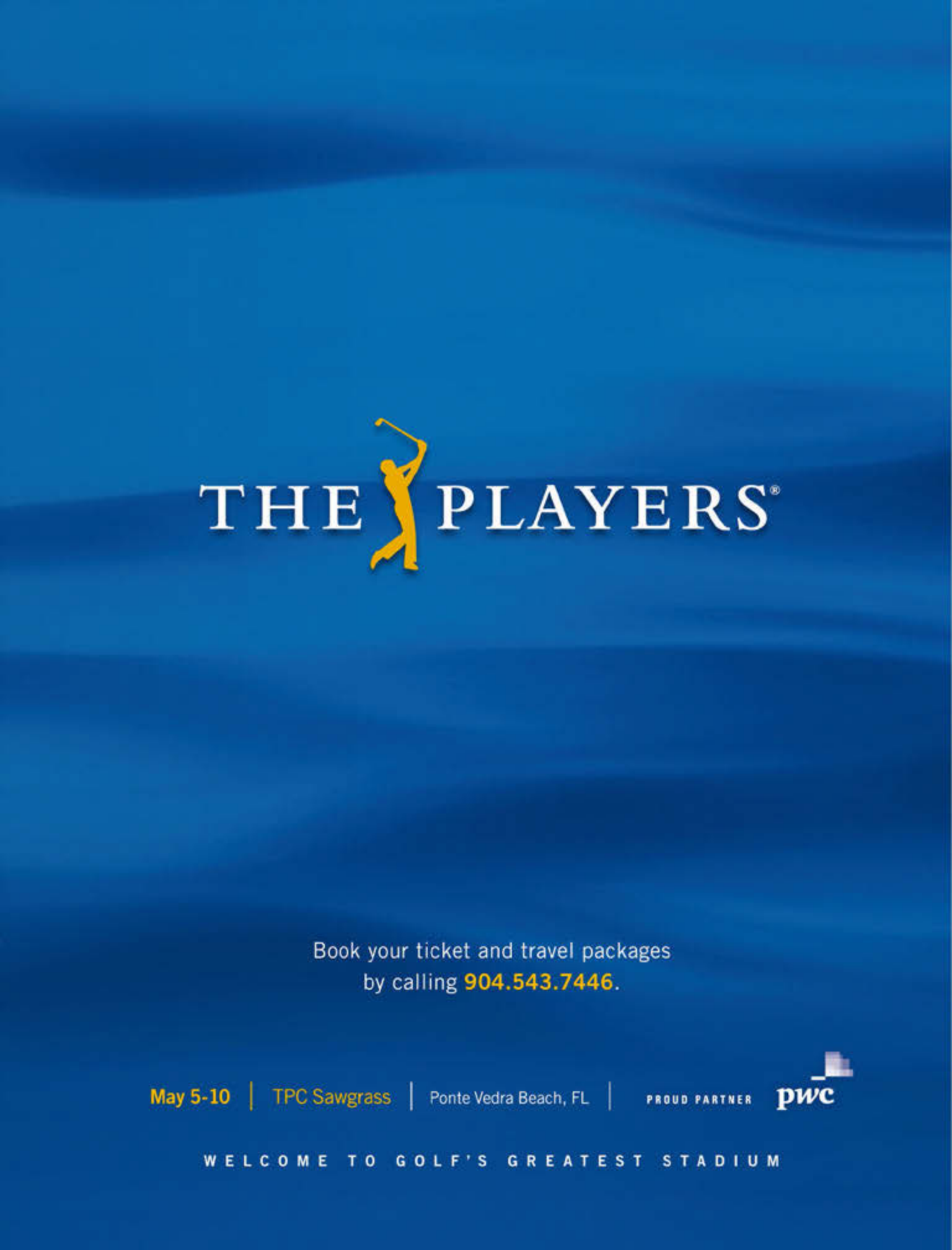
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A FIELD GUIDE TO THE

WHEN NOT CHASING A BUCK, TITANS OF FINANCE ARE OFTEN FOUND CHASING A LITTLE WHITE

1 OLD MONEY

Turpis Divites



JOB: Enjoying inherited fortune.
RANGE: The coasts (Augusta, Pine Valley, Fishers Island, Round Hill, Cypress Point, Seminole).
MARKINGS: Bucket hat, tucked-in Pima-cotton shirt and Bills Khakis. FootJoy saddle shoes with anklets. Two tiny logos: one on the hat, another on the breast of the shirt. High-end irons well-used and half a dozen seasons old, but meticulously maintained. Vintage blade putter.
CHARACTERISTICS: Refers to good shots as "tidy." USGA Handicap Index is scrupulously maintained. Game of choice is $10 nassau. Doesn't answer any job questions directly. ("I'm in the markets," "My family was in the tea business.") Has an American Express black card but never uses it.

2 HEDGE-FUND MANAGER

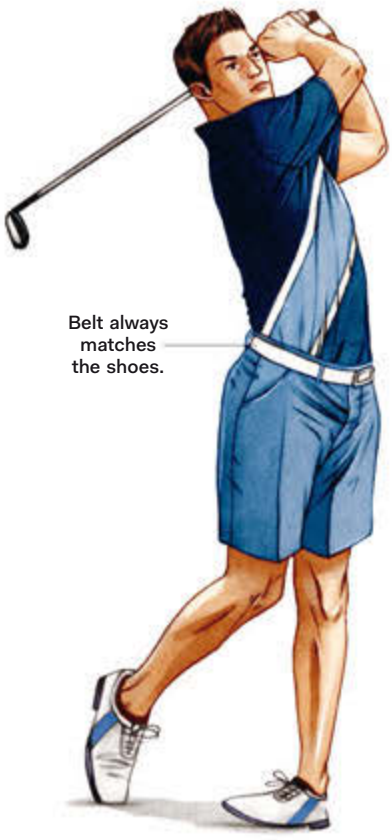
Stropha Rex



JOB: Directing a portfolio of private investments using aggressive, highly proprietary strategies and collecting a percentage of all gains.
RANGE: Fairfield County, Conn. (Stanwich), and Monterey County, Calif. (Pebble Beach).
MARKINGS: High-silk and exotic-leather content. Oversize staff bag with 15 to 20 clubs, UPC stickers still attached, and at least five headcovers. Two smartphones omnipresent.
CHARACTERISTICS: Infrequent player, with a ratio of memberships to annual rounds played approaching 1-to-1. Vanity handicap. Enthusiastic, complicated gambler (automatic 2-down presses and $50 greenies, snakes, barkies, sandies and legends). Will use stakes as method of intimidation: "When can we press again?" Is not "out here to relax."

3 INVESTMENT BANKER

Arcanus Clausus



JOB: Working with corporations to raise money and buy or sell other companies.
RANGE: Northeast to Mid-Atlantic (Winged Foot, Caves Valley, The Country Club, Quail Hollow).
MARKINGS: Polished. Prefers Ralph Lauren, Brooks Brothers and Vineyard Vines—anything with tiny animals. New tour-spec driver and irons, and a $750 Scotty Cameron custom putter.
CHARACTERISTICS: Often a strong player but can miss subtle social cues (aggressively negotiating handicaps, ungenerous about giving putts). Thrives in scrambles and pro-ams, where lack of practice isn't a big factor. Olympic-level name-dropper. ("Tiger was my partner there the year before he crashed his truck.") Formidable 19th-hole skills. Not known for carrying cash.

Illustrations by Michael Hoeweler

GOLFERS OF WALL STREET

BALL. HERE'S HOW TO IDENTIFY THEM—AND WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR GAMES

4 PRIVATE BANKER

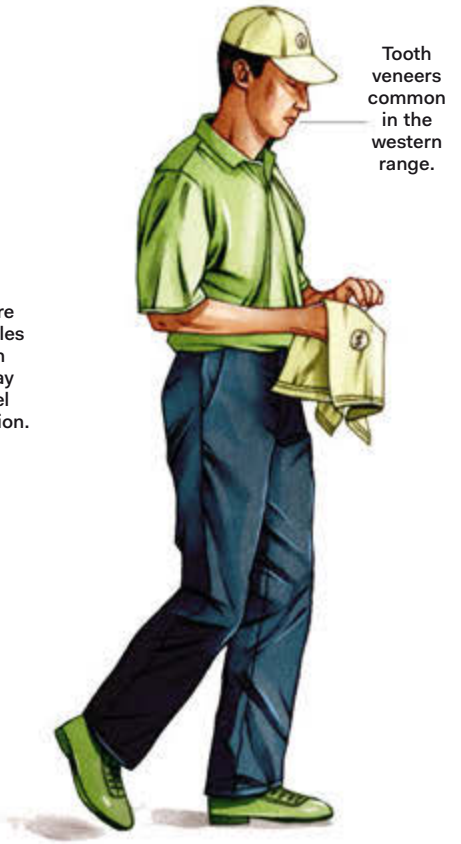
Auriem in Manu



JOB: Offering personal financial management to wealthy individuals.
RANGE: South Florida, large cities, wealthy suburbs (Champions Golf Club, Oakland Hills, Westchester, Trump National Bedminster, Estancia).
MARKINGS: Visually similar to *Arcanus Clausus*, differentiated by extended range, larger population and higher percentage of females.
CHARACTERISTICS: Notably more sociable than *Arcanus Clausus*, from more extensive client interaction. Usually an active, low-single-digit-handicapper at a "players" club. Attractive and enjoyable partner for playing skill and exhaustive pre-round research. ("Relax, pards. I got this hole. We'll use that nice little hard fade on 14. It sets up perfect for you. Let's talk a little more about that development in Telluride.")

5 STOCKBROKER

Dux Patet



JOB: Buying and selling securities for individual and institutional investors, earning a commission.
RANGE: Nationwide (Bethpage Black, Bandon Dunes, Whistling Straits).
MARKINGS: Mildly upscale standard clothing, brand coordinated and relaxed fit. Financial-services-logoed hat, towel and golf balls. Cart bag with latest equipment, business cards and logo pens.
CHARACTERISTICS: Aggressive friendliness and small talk. Usually has a history of athleticism in other sports. ("You're from Rochester? I played ball with a guy from there . . . Let me think of his name.") Game of choice is whatever the client wants. Can reliably be expected to tank late. Carries elaborate money clip with a $100 fronting six 20s and some singles.

6 SEC INVESTIGATOR

Post Duos Gradus



JOB: Hunting for potential violators of securities laws for the federal government.
RANGE: Northeast to Mid-Atlantic (Liberty National, Congressional), Silicon Valley (Half Moon Bay, CordeValle).
MARKINGS: Navy or tan pleated khakis, tube socks and stiff, new inexpensive shoes. Blousy, off-label polo shirt to disguise surveillance wire and transmitter. Unironic flat-brim cap purchased from the shop just before the round. Thick-frame Oakley sunglasses. Rental clubs.
CHARACTERISTICS: Usually selected for the role because of golf experience. Fluid player with Division III skills. Mechanical, rote small talk. ("Ever been to the Caymans?") Does not gamble.

Nearly every room in my house is too fast to host a PGA Tour event.



Green Speeds at Home

What's your living room measure on the Stimp?

One of the greatest things about my house, which was built in 1790 and moved to its current location on the back of a truck 180 years later, is that it contains very few level surfaces. The room I used to use as my office has a carpeted floor that slopes from end to end and sags on the diagonal. When my work got boring, I could practice any kind of putt: right-breaking, left-breaking, uphill, downhill, sidehill, whatever. My living-room floor is less severe, but it's bigger and more undulating. The rug is an old Oriental that belonged to my grandparents, and if you move a couple of chairs you have a putt that might fool a tour pro: a bowl-shape double-breaker from the piano to the nearest leg of a pie-crust table that my wife and I got as a wedding present.

I've often wondered how the floors in my house compare with the greens on real golf courses. Recently, my club's superintendent lent me his Stimpmeter, the official USGA tool for measuring green speed. It's a three-foot-long extruded-aluminum bar, with a shallow, V-shape trough running down the center. You find a level putting surface a dozen feet across, place a ball in a notch near one end of the bar, then slowly lift that end until the ball begins to roll. You do that in both directions, and the speed of the green is the average run-out, in feet and inches. For normal golf courses nowadays, readings of 9 or 10 are considered fast, and greens at major tournaments are probably 12 or higher.

I'd always assumed that almost any ordinary residential rug or carpet would be slower than almost any real green, so I was amazed to find that nearly every room in my house is too fast to host a PGA Tour event. My living-room rug measured almost 15, and the carpet in our basement rec room—a super-cheap nylon level-loop pile, installed over concrete on a three-quarter-inch foam pad—was over 20. (I can't give you a precise reading for that one, because the balls, in both directions, rolled all the way to the wall.) Back in the 1990s, Paul Stankowski said he had practiced for the Masters by putting on the floor of his garage, but probably my living room, or his, would have been more realistic.

I took my Stimpmeter to Northeast Carpet and Flooring, in New Milford, Conn. The owner, Joe Welch, had recently returned from a golf trip to Florida, and when I told him I was looking for a household carpet that would putt realistically he took me down to the basement. He unrolled a long remnant of a lightweight cut-pile, in which the yarns were fairly long and the weave was fairly loose. The Stimpmeter reading on that one was only 5—which, believe it or not, is roughly what ordinary golf courses averaged as recently as the 1970s. Then we tried a similar but denser carpet, with a much shorter pile—the kind you might glue down on an office floor. That piece was 12 feet wide, and my test balls all rolled to the opposite edge, meaning that it was suitable for major-tournament practice, possibly, but too fast for normal play. "But you don't really want to be putting on this stuff," Welch said, "because it's not true, right?" Maybe not—although earlier that day I'd had extremely promising results in my son's old bedroom, on a nice dense Saxony with a little depth to it (about 9-6).

Welch suggested that I visit Paul Ramee, a customer of his, who owns Golf on the Green, an indoor teaching center a couple of miles down the road. During the regular season, Ramee is the director of golf at Bull's Bridge Golf Club, in South Kent, whose course was designed by Tom Fazio. Ramee's back room has a super-fancy synthetic-grass putting surface, with subtle breaks and six cups, installed by Pro Putt Systems. It's designed to roll at 10-6. I tested it and decided it was more like 11-6. "Foot traffic speeds it up," Ramee said, "and when that happens I can take it back down by vacuuming it."

The large front room, where Ramee gives full-swing lessons, is carpeted with less-expensive fake grass, manufactured by a floor-covering company called Beaulieu of America and installed by Welch. Ramee doesn't use it for putting, but I tested it anyway. It measured a little over 9—and it putted quite nicely, too, especially where people had been walking. "Wow," I said. "You could carpet a whole basement with this."

"I've thought about that," Ramee said. "But my wife would never let me."

RICHARD DECKER

PROMOTION









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Poppy Hills might just be the coolest golf hang on 17 Mile Drive.



Makin' Bacon

A Monterey course sizzles again thanks to a makeover

Bacon is bacon, right? It's a warm, salty, crunchy, chewy strip of deliciousness just about anywhere you go. Then you take a bite of the homemade bacon prepared every day at Poppy Hills Golf Course in Pebble Beach and . . . your world changes forever. It's made from smoked, whole pork bellies, and it's so good that before you can finish your last bite, you're thinking, ***Can I get some to go? Is it on the lunch menu? Can I pre-order for tomorrow?***

The man behind the bacon ($4) is Poppy's new executive chef, Johnny De Vivo, who previously worked for two of the Monterey Peninsula's top restaurants: La Bicyclette and Casanova. His arrival is one of several recent changes at Poppy, a new addition to our Best in State list. Robert Trent Jones Jr. completed a multimillion-dollar renovation. It's a par 71 (instead of par 72) and 139 yards longer, stretching just over 7,000 yards. It's also a lot drier thanks to better drainage. No more jokes about "Sloppy Hills."

The clubhouse and restaurant (Porter's in the Forest) received a redesign, too. It might just be the coolest golf hang on 17 Mile Drive, with a farm-to-table menu, several flat-screen TVs, terrific views of the Del Monte Forest through its nearly all-glass walls, and that beautiful bacon.

—RON KASPRISKE

When it comes to golf, we get around. Each month our editors share dispatches on the cool things they found.

TRAVIS RATHBONE/TRUNK ARCHIVE


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You're in Jersey, and your golf coach is in Maui? No problem.



Long-Distance Lesson

Mobicoach makes golf instruction more convenient

Let's say you're in need of a quality golf lesson, but the pro at your local driving range looks like he hasn't swung a club since Softspikes were invented. In the past, your options might have been making a road trip to see one of your state's top instructors or paying big bucks to attend a golf school. Even if you could find a good teacher, you'd still have to factor in weather, scheduling and time constraints.

Now you have another option. If you own an iPad with a front-mounted camera (iOS 8.0 or newer), you can get a real-time lesson from an instructor from almost anywhere without leaving your back yard. Mobicoach is a new app (free from iTunes) offering one-on-one interaction with your choice of dozens of golf instructors via video streaming. The app has several interactive features. You or your teacher can draw lines on the screen as if it were a white board to emphasize techniques or positions in the swing. You can also split the screen to compare your swing with previous versions or the swings of other golfers. Plus, you can record the lesson and save it.

There are several instruction apps that offer some facet of Mobicoach's features, such as Golf Coach Direct, V1 Pro and My Pro To Go, but none has the same level of interactivity between student and teacher, says Dave Phillips, co-founder of the Titleist Performance Institute.

Here's how it works: Once you download the app to your iPad (it's not compatible with iPhones) you register with Mobicoach and shop online for the instructor who fits your needs and budget. For example, you can book a 15-minute lesson with Mike Malaska, the 2011 PGA Teacher of the Year, for $125. Other instructors aren't as pricey, with some charging less than $20 for a 15-minute lesson. Most coaches are available within a few hours' notice. At the designated time, each of you gets in front of an iPad camera while logged in to the app, and the lesson begins. The coaching sessions can be lengthened beyond 15 minutes, but company founder Vijay Nadkarni says that shorter lessons appeal to golfers living a faster-pace lifestyle.

"It was very hard for me to make time to take lessons, and when I did, I used to get bored within 20 minutes," Nadkarni says. "I realized I wasn't the only one who felt this way. That's how Mobicoach started."

In addition to golf instruction, Mobicoach is making inroads in fitness training. That means—on, say, your lunch break—you could get a 15-minute fitness checkup followed by a 15-minute swing fix and still have time for your bologna sandwich. —RON KASPRISKE

Illustration by Otto Steininger


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Fleck gave Bolt a hard shove and said, "Do you want to finish what we started in Australia?"

Road Rage in the Scoring Tent

My front-row seat to tour pros' rants

BY DAVID FAY

There's truth to the adage that you can learn a lot about a person's character during a round of golf. To that I would add that if you really want to learn about a tour player's personality, spend about five minutes in the 18th-hole scoring area after the round. ▸ Some players behave like princes, regardless of their score. Good examples: Ben Crenshaw and Nick Price. On the other hand, Ben's college teammate, Tom Kite, would fall into what I coined The 67-76 Club. All smiles and compliments after a 67, but a steady stream of criticism—usually about the course setup, sometimes about the guy he was playing with—after a 76. ▸ I preferred the guys you could count on to be jerks all the time over the chameleons whose score dictated their behavior. Let's just say that the players you've heard stories about typically lived up to their reputations. And don't think there weren't some LPGA players who could lose it, too. (By the way, it should come as no surprise that Jack Nicklaus was a model citizen: always pleasant, never saccharine, no matter his score.)

Gary Player was the most meticulous. He'd check his score twice, backward and forward, then hand the card to the scoring official, unsigned, and call out his hole-by-hole scores by memory. Only after the official confirmed his memory would Gary check his card one last time, and then sign it.

Players are responsible for only the hole-by-hole score, not the total. Adding up the numbers is the committee's responsibility.

I worked at the Metropolitan (New York) Golf Association in the mid-1970s. At the time, one of the area's leading professionals was Babe Lichardus. When Babe was paired with someone he thought played too slowly, he'd show his disdain by recording the slowpoke's hole-by-hole scores using Roman numerals. "I know the numbers up to 10, and I know I don't have to add 'em up—that's *his* job," Babe would say, pointing to the scoring official.

In the 1985 U.S. Senior Open, Dow Finsterwald and amateur Bill Hyndman were grouped together. They'd known one another for decades. When Bill opened up Dow's scorecard, I couldn't help but notice an oddity. Bill turned around and whispered to the volunteer (and unofficial) walking scorer: "Young lady, would you mind reading me Mr. Finsterwald's hole-by-hole scores, starting at hole No. 1?"

Dow's ears picked up, and he turned to Bill and said, "Bill, don't tell me you missed some of my scores." Then Dow looked more carefully at the card and saw it was completely blank. "Not one [bleeping] score! You didn't put down one [bleeping] score? What the hell's the matter with you, Bill?"

It was all sorted out, but that 1985 Senior Open was also the scene of my favorite incident.

Tommy Bolt and Jack Fleck were paired together in the final round. Jack had a 70; Tommy, a 77. The two sat down in the tent, and, wordlessly, exchanged scorecards, checked them and signed them. But before they left my company, Bolt looked at me and said, as if Fleck were not seated right next to him: "Mr. USGA official, I don't give a damn if next year I'm leading this tournament by 10 shots going into the final round—if I'm paired with this no-good, miserable son of a bitch, I'm withdrawing." At which point, Fleck gave Bolt a hard shove and said, "Do you want to finish what we started in Australia?"

Bolt shoved back, almost pushing Jack off his chair and said, "Damn right I do!" Before any real blows were exchanged, I became the peacekeeper. Sort of. "Fellas," I said, "the next group is coming up onto the green, so please take it outside." Somewhat surprisingly, they nodded their heads, stopped the shoving and yelling, and departed.

To this day, I don't know if they managed to finish what they started in Australia—or what it was that happened in Australia. Perhaps some contemporary might read this and enlighten me. I'd like that.



Illustration by Mark Matcho

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Many tequilas are aged in oak barrels, so they're a lot mellower.

Don't Shoot!

Good tequila is meant to be savored

Remember that spring break on South Padre Island when you woke up at 5 a.m. in a laundromat? Just a guess, but was tequila involved? That's unfortunate, because the alcohol mostly associated with syrupy-sweet margaritas and rapid-fire shots with salt and lime deserves a better reputation than a recollection of your worst hangover. "The quality is so much better now," says Antonio Rodriguez, production manager for Tequila Patrón. Rodriguez, Kevin Vanegas of Tequila Herradura and bartender Krystle-Lynn Kingcade of the Añejo bar in New York City suggest you give the spirit another try. This time, order an añejo or reposado, and sip it with or without a little ice, like a single-malt scotch. If you prefer cocktails, try it as a replacement for whiskey in a manhattan or an old-fashioned. Many tequilas are aged in oak barrels (reposados for almost a year, añejos for longer), so they're a lot mellower than that biting taste you might recall. They don't need to be masked in a margarita or quickly downed like bad medicine. "Don't shoot it with salt and lime," Kingcade says. "All that ever did was help mask the bitter taste from poorly made tequila. That's not an issue anymore." —RON KASPRISKE



TOP SHELF

1 ROCA PATRÓN AÑEJO ($90) Aged for about 14 months in bourbon barrels. Made using the "tahona" process of crushing the agave (all tequila is made from this plant) with a large stone wheel. Cinnamon, pepper and oak flavors shine. There's also a hint of that familiar biting agave flavor.

2 HERRADURA REPOSADO ($40) Aged for 11 months in oak barrels supplied by parent company Brown-Forman. (It makes Woodford Reserve, among other whiskies.) A very friendly citrus taste is noticeable, along with honey—just like a bourbon.

3 DON JULIO 70 AÑEJO CLARO ($50) A blanco (clear or white) tequila that has been aged for 18 months in white oak. Sweet and sour notes are highlighted by vanilla and lemon. Perfect for sipping or as a replacement for vodka in a Bloody Mary (Bloody Maria).

Photograph by Eddie Berman

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A **20-year** Augusta National Member



Q How is it possible that I played more than 30 rounds last year, and I got worse? My handicap is going up!

MATT BISCHOFF, NEW YORK CITY

A What can we say? Golf can be cruel. But as long as you're having fun, don't worry about your number. Just think of all the extra strokes you'll get in nassaus. You'll be raking in the cash. Besides, you're not alone. Golf Digest handicap expert Dean Knuth says most people finish the season within two shots—better or worse—of their Index at the beginning of the year. One big exception is Zhong (Amy) Gibbs, 43, of Wimberley, Texas. Playing as much as five times a week in 2014, Zhong's Index plummeted from 28.8 to 6.8. Her 22-shot improvement was attested by Andrew Bryant, tournament coordinator at Vaaler Creek Golf Club. Gibbs even had a 78 in October.

What is indoor golf? I heard some guys talking about it.

REID COLSON, RICHMOND, VA.

▸▸▸

Hang on for a second. I've got to bank this shot off my Barcalounger to get up and down. OK, back to your question. We can't say for certain, but we believe indoor golf was invented by the Scots around 1687 as something to do when (add heavy Scottish accent here) "it's a wee too dreich" to play real golf. We think they used softer balls made from haggis to avoid breaking lamps. Today, we use computer simulators indoors to play on Scottish golf courses that are too dreich to play otherwise. See? Full circle.

How many pros still wear steel spikes, and what do they do for tournaments played at clubs where they're banned?

ROB ZAWORSKI, ATLANTA

▸▸▸

More than three-quarters of PGA Tour players wear spikeless footwear, but on any given week, about 30 players still have "the nails" in their shoes. Among them are players such as Rory McIlroy, Tiger Woods and Bubba Watson, who use Champ's ProStinger cleat—a plastic spike with a metal tip. Although most clubs have a no-metal policy, they waive it for tour events. However, that's not always the case for U.S. Open qualifying. In 2006, Steve Elkington withdrew from a qualifier when he learned he couldn't wear his metal spikes. In 2013, Lee Janzen was disqualified from a qualifier for wearing metal spikes at a site that didn't allow them. —THE EDITORS

QUICK HITS

▸ **What are Winter Rules?** There's only one: No whining about the cold.

▸ **How cold is too cold for golf?** 273.15 degrees, Kelvin.



▸ **Any advice for putting on a windy day?** Turn your hat backward.

▸ **OK to wear winter golf mittens?** Sure, but they're gonna hurt your short game.

JERK MOVE?

Whenever I show up at a course as a single, I'd prefer to play by myself, if possible, instead of being paired up. Am I alone on this?

You're not alone. You're a loner. Some enjoy the social aspects of the game, and others get tense when their games are on display for strangers. You're not a jerk for asking to go alone, but you could be missing out on a friendship, a business deal, or even a witness to your first hole-in-one. Next time, try pairing up.

Submit your burning questions here: ask@golfdigest.com or on Twitter @GolfDigest

MATTHIAS CLAMER/GETTY IMAGES • SPOT ILLUSTRATION: ZOHAR LAZAR

Illustration by Richard Mia

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Madden's on Gull Lake was voted 53rd in Condé Nast Traveler's reader-generated ranking of the Top 100 Hotels & Resorts in the World. Madden's offers four courses, fine dining, a spa, and unlimited recreational amenities at an upscale lakeside resort. **The Classic at Madden**, where caddies are available and walking is encouraged, is challenging and memorable—a purist's dream. It measures over 7100 yards from the tips and features 56 Ohio's Best white sand bunkers, water on 16 holes and greens stimping over 11. **The Classic** is ranked among Golf Digest's 100 Greatest Public Courses.

Giants Ridge is the only Minnesota golf resort with two courses named to Golf Digest's ranking of America's 100 Greatest Public Courses. **The Quarry** is currently the No. 25 public course in the U.S. and No. 1 in Minnesota, and **The Legend** is No. 4 in Minnesota. In terms of quality and value, there are few destinations that can compare to Giants Ridge.

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ON-AIR ACTION: A GUIDE TO GOLF ON TV

You don't have to put your passion for golf on hold every time you leave the course. **Just tune in to all the tournament coverage on television.** This page lists golf telecasts that will help keep your head in the game. (All times listed are Eastern.)

APRIL 2015
FEATURED EVENT
MAJOR CHAMPIONSHIP
The Masters
Augusta, GA/April 9-12
Site: Augusta National Golf Club
2014 Champion: Bubba Watson
Prize money: $9 million

TV Coverage:
April 9: 3-7:30 pm (ESPN)
April 10: 3-7:30 pm (ESPN)
April 11: 3-7 pm (CBS)
April 12: 2-7 pm (CBS)

PGA TOUR
Shell Houston Open
Humble, TX/April 2-5
Site: Golf Club of Houston
2014 Champion: Matt Jones
Prize money: $6.6 million

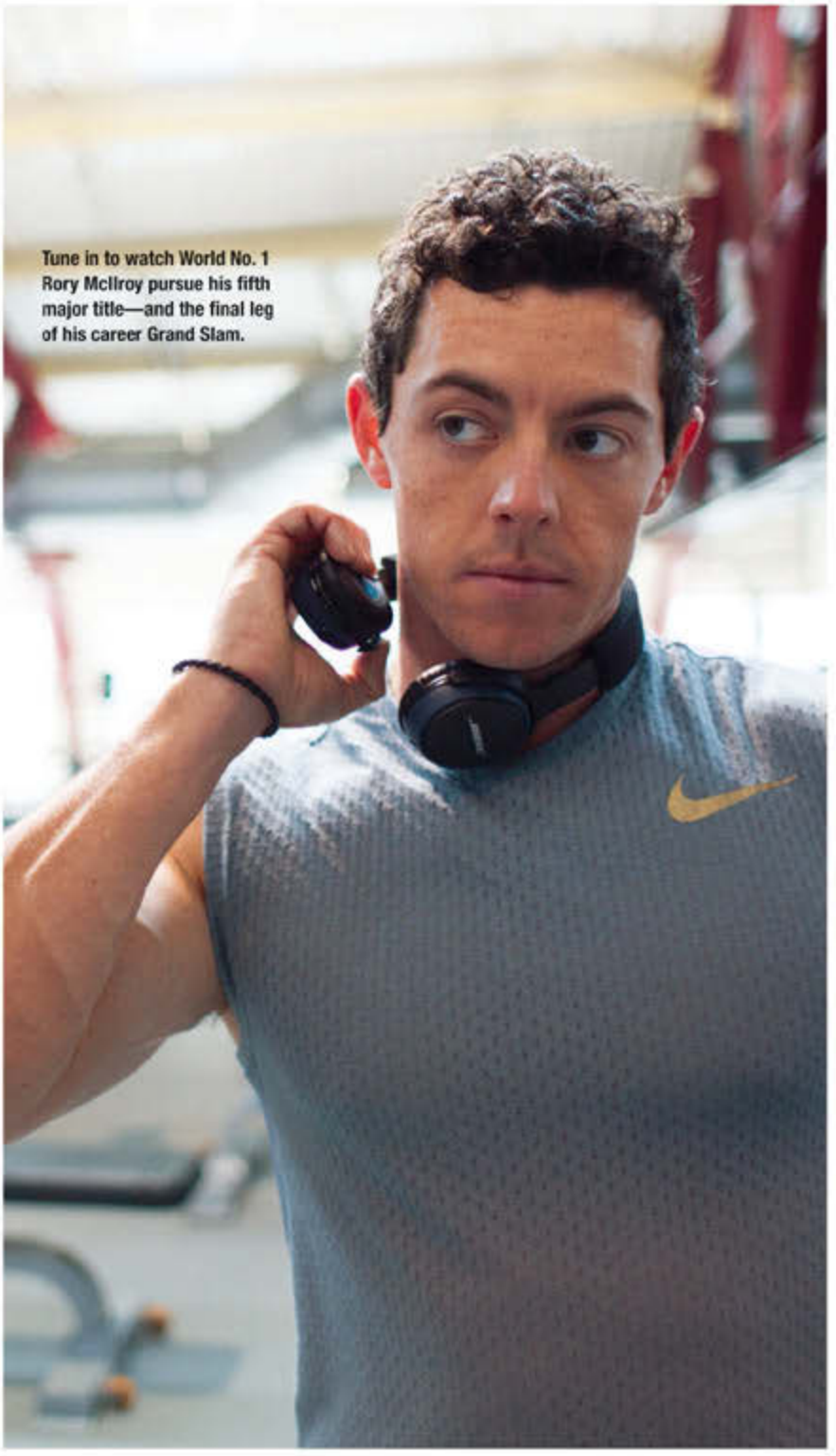
TV Coverage
April 2: 3-6 pm (Golf Channel)
April 3: 3-6 pm (Golf Channel)
April 4: 1-3 pm (Golf Channel); 3-6 pm (NBC)
April 5: 1-3 pm (Golf Channel); 3-6 pm (NBC)

LPGA TOUR
ANA Inspiration
Rancho Mirage, CA/April 2-5
Site: Mission Hills Country Club (Dinah Shore Tournament Course)
2014 Champion: Lexi Thompson
Prize money: $2.5 million

TV Coverage
April 2: 12-3 pm; 6-9 pm (Golf Channel)
April 3: 12-3 pm; 6-9 pm (Golf Channel)
April 4: 5-9 pm (Golf Channel)
April 5: 5-9 pm (Golf Channel)

PGA TOUR
RBC Heritage
Hilton Head, SC/April 16-19
Site: Harbour Town Golf Links
2014 Champion: Matt Kuchar
Prize money: $5.9 million

TV Coverage
April 16: 3-6 (Golf Channel)
April 17: 3-6 (Golf Channel)
April 18: 3-6 (CBS)
April 19: 3-6 (CBS)



Tune in to watch World No. 1 Rory McIlroy pursue his fifth major title—and the final leg of his career Grand Slam.

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APRIL 2015
FEATURED EVENT
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2014 Champion: Bubba Watson
Prize money: $9 million

TV Coverage:
April 9: 3-7:30 pm (ESPN)
April 10: 3-7:30 pm (ESPN)
April 11: 3-7 pm (CBS)
April 12: 2-7 pm (CBS)

CHAMPIONS TOUR
Greater Gwinnett Championship
Duluth, GA/April 17-19
Site: TPC Sugarloaf
2014 Champion: Miguel Angel Jimenez
Prize money: $1.8 million

TV Coverage
April 15: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)
April 16: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)
April 17: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)
April 18: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)

LPGA TOUR
LPGA LOTTE Championship
Kapolei, Oahu, HI/April 15-18
Site: Ko Olina Golf Club
2014 Champion: Michelle Wie
Prize money: $1.8 million

TV Coverage
April 15: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)
April 16: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)
April 17: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)
April 18: 7-11 pm (Golf Channel)

PGA TOUR
Zurich Classic of New Orleans
Rancho Mirage, CA/April 2-5
Avondale, LA/ April 23-26
Site: TPC Louisiana
2014 Champion: Seung-Yul Noh
Prize money: $6.9 million

TV Coverage
April 23: 3-6 (Golf Channel)
April 24: 3-6 (Golf Channel)
April 25: 3-6 (CBS)
April 26: 3-6 (CBS)

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2014 Champion: Bubba Watson
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April 10: 3-7:30 pm (ESPN)
April 11: 3-7 pm (CBS)
April 12: 2-7 pm (CBS)

CHAMPIONS TOUR
Bass Pro Shops Legends of Golf at Big Cedar Lodge
Ridgedale, MO/April 24-26
Site: Big Cedar Lodge 2014 Champion: Fred Funk/Jeff Sluman
Prize money: $2.8 million

TV Coverage
April 24: 10:30 am-12:30 pm (Golf Channel)
April 25: 9-11 pm (Golf Channel, TD)
April 26: 9-11 pm (Golf Channel, TD)

PGA TOUR
World Golf Championships-Cadillac Match Play
San Francisco, CA/April 29-May 3
Site: TPC Harding Park
2014 Champion: Jason Day
Prize money: $9.25 million

TV Coverage
April 29: 12-6 (Golf Channel)
April 30: 2-6 (Golf Channel)
May 1: 2-6 (Golf Channel
May 2: 12-2 (Golf Channel); 2-6 pm (NBC)
May 3: 9 am-1 pm (Golf Channel); 2-6 pm (NBC)

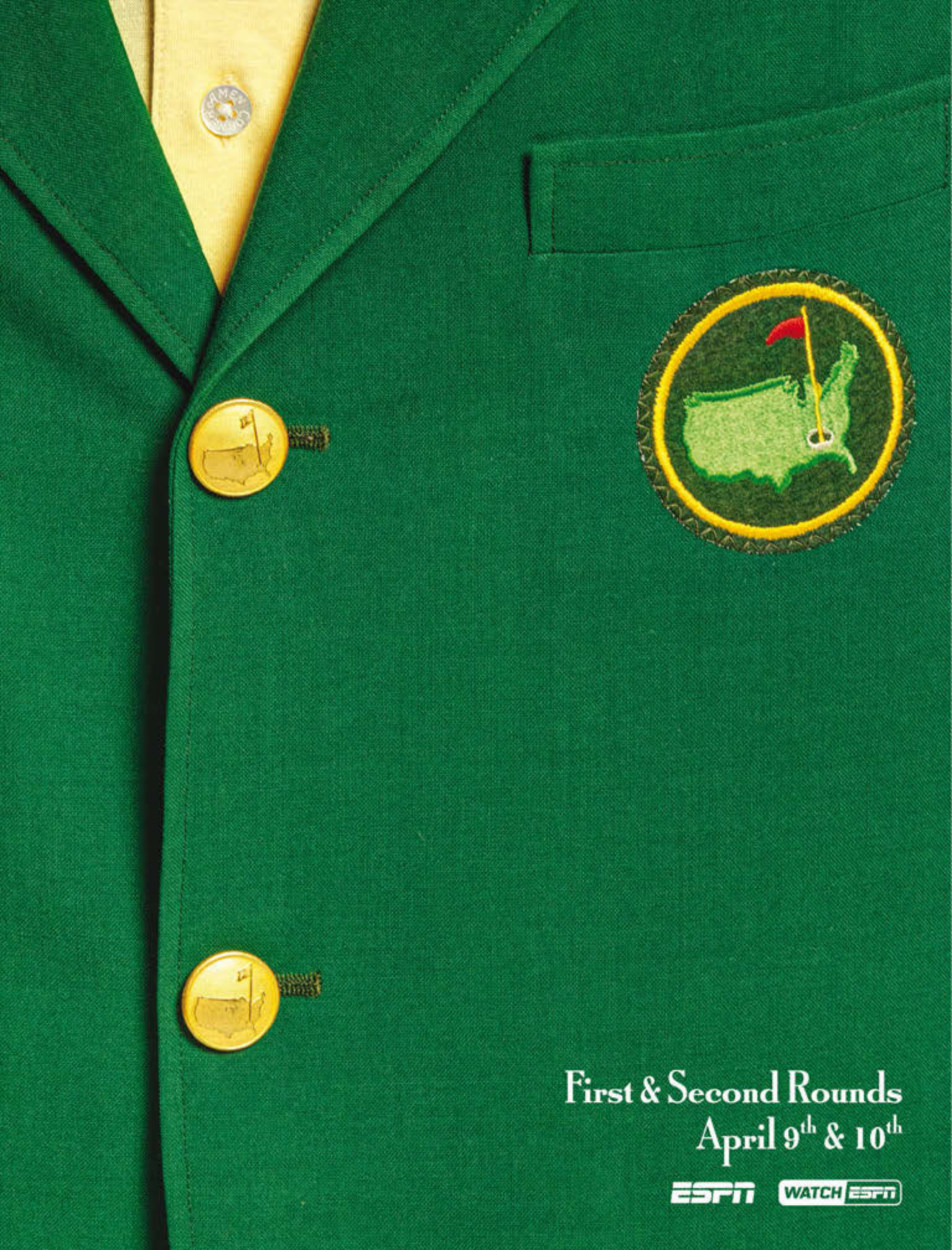
WEB.COM TOUR
United Leasing Championship Presented by PTI
San Francisco, CA/April 29-May 3
Newburgh, IN/April 30-May 3
Site: Victoria National Golf Club
2014 Champion: Greg Owen
Prize money: $600,000

TV Coverage
April 30: 6:30-9 pm (Golf Channel, TD)
May 1: 6:30-8:30 pm (Golf Channel, TD)
May 2: 7-9 pm (Golf Channel, TD)
May 3: 7-9 pm (Golf Channel, TD)

ESPN



Harding Park, home of the World Golf Championships-Cadillac Match Play.


First & Second Rounds
April 9th & 10th
ESPN
WATCH ESPN

How I Met the Ultimate Hustler

Some of the tales about Titanic Thompson are even true

BY DAN JENKINS

If even half the stories about Titanic Thompson were true, he couldn't have lived to be 82 years old. Earlier in his life some gentleman in a pinstriped suit looking like Michael Corleone would have bumped him off. Big shots don't like to get robbed.

I once met Titanic. That's the big news in this effort.

I'd heard most of the stories growing up, and every article I've ever read about Titanic was written by someone who never knew him personally. But I'm not faulting them for it. A lot of people who never knew Napoleon have written about him.

Those who have rhapsodized about Titanic in print were understandably intrigued with the legend and all of the outlandish gambling stories attached to him, many of them helped along by the man himself, along with the stunts and tricks he performed, or supposedly did, to fleece the unwitting in a more naive era.

The tales about him were hard to resist. He was indeed an accomplished professional gambler as well as a hustler, and those are two different things. There is solid testimony from people who did know him that he was an excellent golfer, card player, pool shark and skeet shooter. The rest is up for grabs.

I was 14 when I first heard about Titanic. So did every kid in Texas who spent any time around golf courses. The club pros usually told the stories and pretended to know him, and some did know him, and they were prone to embellish the stories if that was needed to hold your interest.

I believed he could throw an orange or a lemon over a five-story building—I assumed he had an arm like Dizzy Dean. Of course, I later learned the orange or lemon was weighted down with lead. I never believed he could throw a brass key into a door lock from across a hotel room. That defied logic. But I did believe he could throw a bunch of quarters into a snuff can from 30 feet away without missing. At a young age I was willing to believe, if not hopeful, that he had dated movie stars.

There was a lot of romance in the stories about Alvin C. Thomas, which was his real name. Alvin Clarence Thomas of Rogers, Ark., by way of his birthplace, a small town in Missouri.

But I never believed he could knock a bird off a telephone wire by hitting a golf ball at it with a 4-wood. I wasn't that gullible.

Then I found out how he did it if a wager was involved. Ti would drop a ball on the ground and take out his 4-wood, waggle it and pretend to aim at the bird on the wire. When some sucker would bet him he couldn't do it, Ti would pull out a gun he carried and shoot the bird off the wire.

Years later I realized Ti could do some of the things I'd heard about because I saw others do it. Bob Rosburg, for example, could sail 52 cards out of a deck, one by one, into a hat from a good distance away in a locker room.

And this day and time almost any college golfer can bounce a golf ball on the face of a sand wedge 50 times or more without missing. These days it's what a college golfer practices in the dorm instead of studying.



Photograph by Eddie Berman

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A **50-year** Augusta National member

ALL HE WANTED WAS A MILLION DOLLARS

My first long-distance call from Titanic Thompson came in March 1970. He was then living in Grapevine, Texas, which is near Fort Worth and Dallas. I was living in Manhattan and writing for Sports Illustrated. The call came to my office in the Time-Life Building.

I let Titanic know how delighted I was to be speaking with a legend, after which he told me how rich we were going to be when I wrote his story for a movie or a book. All he wanted was a million dollars up front. Just a million.

As the saying goes, I might not be smart, but I'm not stupid. I was aware that I couldn't possibly be the first person Titanic—"Call me Ti"—had ever approached with the project. I must have been far down the list, or he would have sold it by this particular time in history.

I was also busy. Not only with my magazine assignments, but I was working on a novel, which happened to be *Semi-Tough*. Still, I didn't want to blow him off altogether. I told him I would ask around, talk to my agent, try to see if his story could "gain any traction in the marketplace," to use agent-speak, and we would chat again another day.

Which we did. A week later. When he called to try to stoke my interest by rolling his credits as a folklore character. I heard how he had set up the poker game at which Arnold Rothstein, a crime boss, was murdered in New York City. How he won a bundle off Howard Hughes at Lakeside Golf Club. How he took on other Hollywood folks on the golf course and "picked 'em like chickens." How he had skinned that "big fraud," John Montague, at Lakeside. How he'd dated all those Myrna Loys in Hollywood.

I told Titanic I would be in Fort Worth in May for the Colonial tournament. Maybe we could get together. I wanted to meet the notorious figure in the flesh. He was 77 then, dividing his time between Tenison Park in Dallas and Meadowbrook in Fort Worth, two public golf courses where gentlemen of sporting blood gathered. He still fancied wagers.

The Titanic Thompson I found at Meadowbrook was thin, white-haired and roughly six feet tall. First, I broke the news that I couldn't find any interest in a book or a movie. The book people had never heard of him, which didn't surprise me. The movie people said "Guys and Dolls" had covered the subject of gambling, and a golf movie didn't yell money at them.

I did tell him that SI would be interested in an article. He could collaborate with a writer on our staff, and the magazine would pay him a fee of some sort.

He said he would give it some thought.

The thing I wanted to hear about the most was his side of the legend-filled match he played against a young Byron Nelson in Fort Worth, but I led up to it with questions about other things.

I said, "You mentioned John Montague on the phone. You said 'Golf's Mystery Man' was a fraud?"

Ti said, "The biggest mystery to me was how he ever got famous. He could hit a long drive, but he couldn't break par for his own money. Heck, if you gave me two strokes a hole, I could beat you with a baseball bat and a rake and putting with my shoe. He got all he wanted of me in one day at Lakeside. But the middle 70s was all he needed to shoot to beat those Hollywood people with low handicaps they couldn't play to. Except for Howard Hughes. Howard was a good golfer. He worked hard at the game. He took lessons. Howard wanted to win the National Amateur more than he wanted to make movies. But he was never that good."

I said, "Your reputation came in handy, didn't it?"

"It did when my name got around," he said. "I come to find out there were a lot of people who wanted to lose money to Titanic Thompson. It gave 'em a story to tell their friends. I took advantage of that."

"Golf was the game you were best at?"

He said, "I was good at cards, too. I never cheated at cards. I played straight up. I could read cards, and I could read people. I mostly played poker, but I could play any old card game."

I wanted to hear about his name. I'd read that he adopted "Thompson" when he saw his name misprinted in a newspaper.

"Titanic Thompson does have a better ring to it than Titanic Thomas," I said.

He nodded.

As lore had it, he got the name Titanic as a young man before World War I in a pool hall in Joplin, Mo. But I said I found it hard to buy that he got it by jumping over a pool table, or diving over a pool table, or whatever else he'd let people believe.

He said, "I did get the name in a pool game in Joplin, before the war. Snow Clark gave it to me. We were in a big game of pocket pool. Snow and me were partners against two other fellers. The stakes got pretty high. Snow saw me miss a couple of shots I should have made, and he knew it takes as much skill to miss a shot intentionally as it does to make it. He thought I'd put him in the can—that I'd bet on the other side. That's when he said, 'Boy, you're sinkin' me like the Titanic.' I started laughing. I knew he'd given me a great name."

"I'll take that version," I said.

DIFFERING MEMORIES OF THE MATCH AGAINST BYRON NELSON

In years past I'd talked to Ben Hogan and Byron Nelson about Titanic. Each said he possessed a fine golf swing and was a hell of a player. Hogan also said, "Only a fool would play him in a game he suggested."

The match between Titanic and Byron wasn't covered by the press and was never written about, but it became a part of Fort Worth golf history. They played an 18-hole match for $1,000—winner take all—in 1931 at Ridglea on the west side of town. Ridglea was a public course then, but since 1954 it has been a country club of prominence.

One thousand was big money in those days. It would be the equivalent of $14,000 today in terms of buying power.

Ti was in town, and all of the public courses were gambling haunts back then. He dropped by Ridglea and let it be known that he wanted to play "the best man in town." Word reached a member at Glen Garden Country Club, where Byron was a junior member. This was a year before he turned pro. Byron was the best amateur around the area then.

The member at Glen Garden liked games of chance and rounded up two other investors to back Nelson in the match.

Byron's memory of the event:

"I never gambled at golf in my life, and I didn't want to be a part of it. I don't really remember who the backers were. A Mr. Brown was involved, but that's the only name I recall. Mr. Brown said not to worry about the money. All I had to do was play my best golf—they were taking the risk.

"Well, of course, I enjoyed competition. I wanted to play my best. About a dozen people followed us. I was nervous and bogeyed two holes and fell behind, but I played well on the back nine. We both shot 70, which was one under par, I believe. The match was a tie. We broke even."

I shared Byron's memory of the match with Titanic at Meadowbrook.

Ti said, "Byron Nelson said we tied? Well, all I know is, I shot a 70 and Byron shot a 71. Ask Mr. Brown if we broke even."

Before our meeting ended, Titanic said, "I can still play a little. I'll tell you what. You let me tee it up everywhere, even in the bunkers and the rough, and I'll bet you two hundred I can shoot my age. I'll shoot a 77."

I could only smile.

"I'll bet you can, too, Ti," I said.

ZOHAR LAZAR

Keep the clubhead low through impact for a higher ball flight.

The Masters might make you think of azaleas in bloom, Amen Corner or the green jacket, but it makes me think about hitting sky-high iron shots. That's the only way to get the ball close to some of the pins at Augusta, especially when you've got a 6-iron or longer into the green. Flighting the ball higher makes my carry distances more predictable and gets the ball to stop quicker—two major control factors. That really helped me win the Farmers Insurance Open in February. Torrey's greens were so firm, I needed to drop my irons in softly. There are several things you can do at address and during the swing to create a higher trajectory. And the beauty is, you can pick the adjustments that work best with your current swing. Start with this one: Visualize the shot. If you think about hitting it higher and look up at address to how high you want the ball to go, you'll often subconsciously adjust by tilting back, setting more weight on your rear foot, and so on. Turn the page for other ways to launch your iron shots. —WITH RON KASPRISKE



SHOOT FOR THE SKY

HOW TO LAUNCH YOUR IRONS HIGHER

BY JASON DAY

Photographs by Dom Furore

ADD LOFT TO THE FACE

▸ Increasing the loft of the clubface at impact will definitely increase the height of the shot. But how you do that could affect your shot shape, so adjustments are necessary. Try these two ways to add loft:

1 Set your clubface so it's pointing slightly right of your target at address. From there, resist the urge to square the face at impact. Note: An open face will promote a left-to-right shot for right-handed golfers, so you might want to adjust your aim or swing path accordingly. It's easier to add height to a fade than to a draw, so I like to open the face and swing on a path left of my target.

2 Picture your hands above the ball's position, not pushed forward, at impact. It can help to set the clubshaft in a vertical position at address—straight up and down. Good players often lean the shaft toward the target to compress iron shots. They can still hit it high because they've got a lot of clubhead speed, but most amateurs need to hit with the shaft more neutral to achieve a higher trajectory.

SHALLOW THE SWING

▸ If the clubhead approaches the ball on an angle that's closer to horizontal with the ground than vertical—think of a jumbo jet landing on a runway—it's going to produce a higher launch angle. Here are two things you can do to shallow your approach:

1 Play the ball farther forward in your stance (*right*). At the same time, make sure you're supporting your body weight a little more with your back foot. I wouldn't go too far forward with the ball. If you normally play your 6-iron a couple of inches forward of center, move it up another inch. That will naturally increase the dynamic loft of the club at impact.

2 Feel as if you're sweeping the ball off the turf. You still want to take a thin sliver of a divot in front of the ball to ensure that you hit the shot solidly, but don't try to chop down on it or scoop it into the air. A good swing thought is to keep the clubhead low through the impact zone. This will reduce your angle of approach.





CREATE MORE CLUB SPEED

▸ I wouldn't advise you to swing wildly fast, but you need to make an aggressive move through impact to increase backspin, which makes the ball fly higher. Make these two adjustments to boost your speed:

1 Keep your body turning through the shot. The club moves fastest when it's propelled by your arms and body rotating together. You can't create power for a higher flight if you're all arms. Even worse, if your body stops turning through, your arms will whip past you and flip the clubface shut. That's a low hook.

2 Swing your hands high to the finish (*right*). Slinging the club up and over your lead shoulder not only creates speed through the shot, it promotes a higher launch. Don't rush to make this high-hands finish. If you set up as I've described—a little more on your back foot, with the ball forward—you're pre-setting a high finish. Then just make a level strike with plenty of speed, and you'll launch it into the sky and parachute it onto the green.

JASON DAY, 27, is a three-time PGA Tour winner and has two top-three finishes in four Masters starts (2011 and '13).

SWINGING TO A HIGH FINISH WITH THE ARMS AND CLUB IS A GREAT THOUGHT TO BOOST TRAJECTORY.

+
ADIDAS
shirt, $80
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belt, $50
shoes, $190
TAYLORMADE
hat, $25
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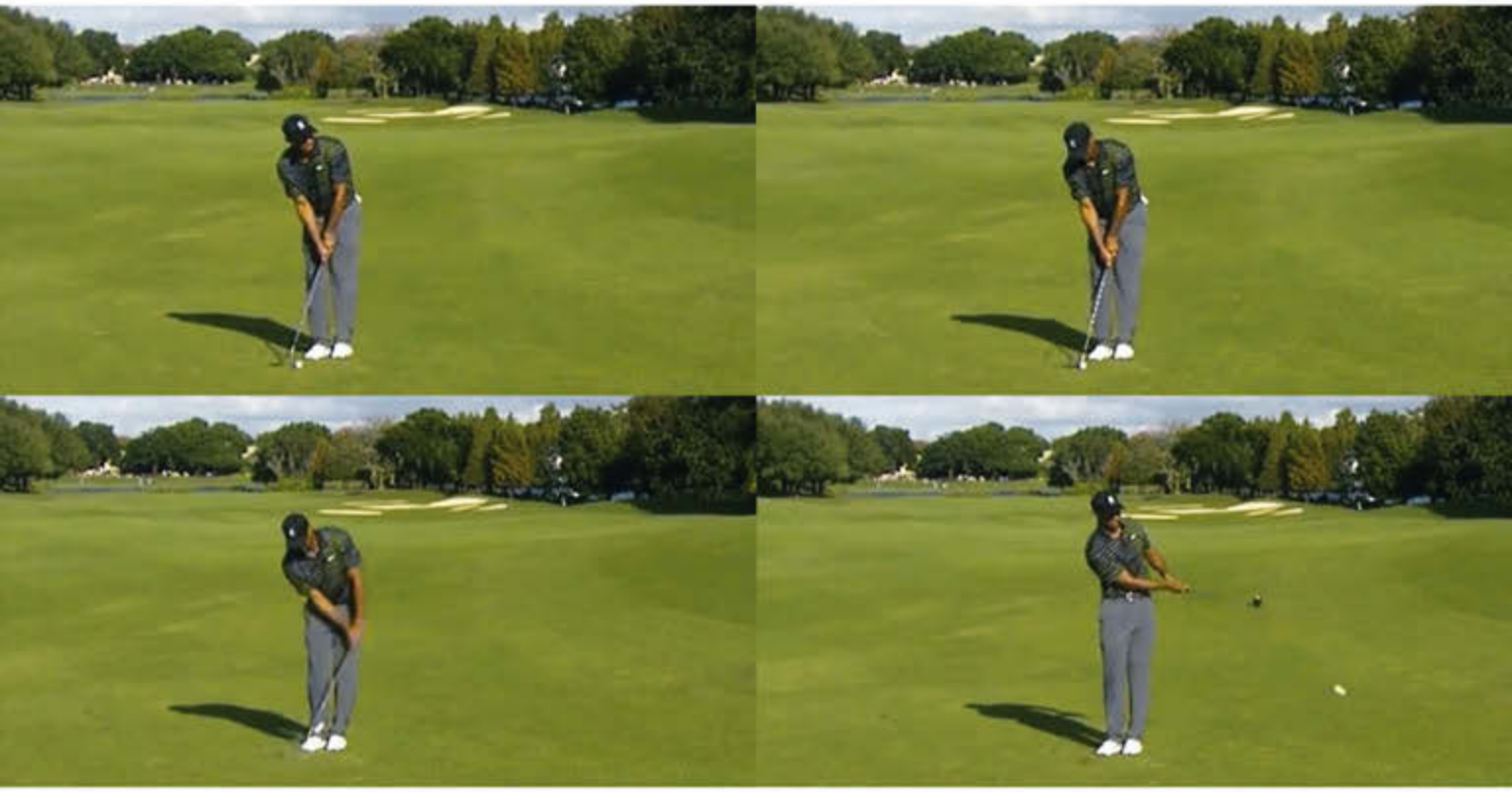
BY HANK HANEY



IN A CAREER FILLED WITH DRAMA, COULD THIS BE THE LAST ACT?

HOW? TIGER GOT THE YIPS

FROM THE TIME TIGER WOODS STARTED showing serious short-game issues at the Hero World Challenge late last year, there's been a lot of talk about what the problem might be. He's making a swing change. He's rusty after taking time off to recover from back surgery. He's stuck between an old short-game release pattern and a new one. Everybody from Brandel Chamblee to Rocco Mediate to Paul Azinger to just about every teaching pro on Twitter and Facebook has a thought about what he should do to solve the problem. Tiger has said it's just a question of getting in more reps. Chamblee and Mediate say he's getting too technical and needs to work with somebody "old school," who will get him away from that. Azinger says it's so simple he could fix it in 10 minutes. Let's be serious. Tiger Woods has the yips.



It doesn't have anything to do with Tiger's new swing consultant, Chris Como, and what they're working on in his full swing. It isn't because the fixes in his long game are leaking into his chipping. It isn't a mechanical flaw. It isn't pressure.

It's the yips.

Everybody is looking for the mechanical flaw that will let him somehow flip a switch and start hitting good shots again. They're saying it's just a matter of time before he's back to the old Tiger Woods.

It's not that simple.

Think about it. Chris Como is a smart guy. Tiger is a smart guy. They've seen a lot of things, and they're around plenty of other people who have a lot of experience and have seen a lot of things.

Don't you think by now somebody would have found the mechanical flaw that has apparently turned Tiger from one of the best short-game players of all time into a guy who's *missing the green* on basic pitch shots? Or is it more likely that they've told him those mechanical things, and he's aware of them—and the shots we've seen are still happening?

It can't be anything but the yips. The reality is that Tiger is having trouble advancing the ball on short shots out of perfect inch-and-a-half ryegrass rough where he could hit three or four inches behind the ball and have a decent result. In other words, where technique doesn't matter that much.

Yes, he's doing something wrong mechanically. But he doesn't have control of what's happening with the clubhead down through the ball. He knows what he wants to do, but there are times he can't do it.

If you've had the yips—and I have, for more than 20 years—you know what you're seeing when you watch Tiger hit those short shots. It's a mixture of hurry-and-get-this-shot-over-with panic and disbelief.

Hearing guys who've never had the yips write them off as the result of bad technique or say they're easy to fix really makes me laugh. Ask Golf Digest 50 Best Teacher Randy Smith if it's that simple. He has had the chipping yips for more than 30 years. What has he been doing wrong all that time? Seve Ballesteros had more control over the clubface around the green than any person maybe ever. In his last full season on the European Tour, he was No. 1 in putting but made only three cuts. He had the driver yips, and he couldn't find the golf course off the tee. Johnny Miller was one of the greatest ball-strikers ever, until you put a putter in his hands and asked him to make a five-footer. Do you think there was something he didn't try?

The yips get grouped into a category with nervousness and choking, but they're a combination of neurological "fault" mixed with a secondary anxiety element. The top scientists I've consulted say the message between your brain and your muscles gets scrambled, and the muscles start running the wrong program, like when the needle on a turntable goes over a scratch on a record.

Over time, that scratch gets deeper and deeper—and the volume goes up when pressure is introduced. We've tested hundreds of people with the putting yips on a training system called the SAM PuttLab and found that many players have a very low level of yips they don't even feel when they're putting on a practice green. But when they get on the course and play for real, that scratch really starts to reveal itself. And the anxiety grows and grows as the player keeps hitting bad shots.

Tiger's short-game numbers during the past five years show some of those cracks. In 2012, he was fourth on tour in scrambling. In 2013, he was 46th. Last year, he would have been outside the top 150 if he'd played enough rounds to qualify.

His technique was the same all that time, so what changed?

To be honest, I could see some of it in his pitching as early as 2008, when he chunked one at Torrey Pines during the U.S. Open. In four or five years of practicing at Isleworth, I had never seen him hit that kind of obviously yippy shot. But in 2009, he probably did it another eight or nine times, which isn't a lot but is way more than zero. Then, during his first match at the 2010 Ryder Cup in Wales, he chunked one from a tough lie on the 18th hole and left one in a bunker on another hole.

I tried to keep it light and ask him what was up with those shots, but he wouldn't even address it. That's not any kind

OPENING PAGE: MADDIE MEYER/GETTY IMAGES • THIS PAGE: NBC SPORTS



▸ IN HIS FIRST TWO EVENTS BACK, WOODS MIS-HIT 19 SHORT-GAME SHOTS. THIS ONE WAS THE SECOND OF BACK-TO-BACK CHUNKS AT THE HERO WORLD CHALLENGE IN DECEMBER.

of knock on him. It's what tour players do. You pretend it didn't happen, or you blame it on the club. It's a form of protection for your self-confidence.

The issues at the Hero World Challenge late last year were so obvious and public that he couldn't just ignore them. When I was coaching him, I felt like my main short-game responsibilities were to watch and validate that everything looked just like it did when he was chipping well. That's probably what he did this time, too, with Chris Como. Before the Waste Management Phoenix Open, Tiger said he hit "thousands and thousands" of chips to get his reps in on this new, flatter release he says he's working on, and that it was working better.

OK, but in the practice area back home, you can hit a few chips that don't feel so good and then get into a kind of rhythm by hitting a lot of shots. You can come to the end of that practice session and tell yourself that you're working your way out of it.

But when you go back to the course to play, the stakes are so different—and so are the surroundings. You're Tiger Woods. You're the most famous athlete on the planet, and you're coming off a week when you really struggled with those chips.

So now everybody is watching to see what will happen the first time you have one of those little shots. The gallery is holding its breath. The photographers are all ready to take a picture from inside the ropes, right next to you. The television commentators are ready to give their armchair analyses.

If you're Tiger, honestly, how could you *not* be thinking about it at that point?

A shot that used to be second nature is one he's grinding over. And he's not in that rhythm of hitting practice shot after practice shot in shorts, in his back yard. In a tournament round, you might go 30 or 45 minutes between chips, and when it comes time to hit one, you get one chance.

In the middle of all that, you hit one bad, then another. A very real kind of panic sets in—especially if you're as talented as Tiger is—because you've literally lost control of your body.

> 'PANIC SETS IN—ESPECIALLY IF YOU'RE AS TALENTED AS TIGER IS—BECAUSE YOU'VE LITERALLY LOST CONTROL OF YOUR BODY.'

You saw the result.

It's a small sample size, but to this point, it has looked like a total collapse of a skill he used to be great at. It's something nobody can remember seeing any top-level tour player experience, at least in chipping.

Does that sound like something that can be fixed in a few minutes, with a different stance, or with a change in the wrists on the backswing? It's like waking up in the morning and discovering that you forgot how to do basic math. The quick-fix crowd thinks the answer is to go back and do elementary school again. My first thought would be that there's something really wrong in my head, and I need to go get checked out.

Sure, there are some things Tiger can do differently in his chipping to try to reduce the yip. The position he gets into on his backswing, with his right wrist turned under and bent back, is common to a lot of yippers. I'd start by getting him to try to keep his right wrist flat, which would keep the club in front of him more and the clubface square, preventing the leading edge from digging.

He also can try to hit different shots to play around the issue. That doesn't mean playing the same shot with a different club, like he did a few times in Scottsdale. A yipped chip with a sand wedge is a catastrophe. With a 4-iron, it's still bad, but you can advance it. To change the shot, he might need to make a dramatically different swing, or intentionally play some higher shots with more speed.

But none of that addresses the underlying issue. Even if he makes a "perfect" stroke in the technical sense, the yip is still in there. That's why going down the mechanical road won't solve anything.

To me, it's as if you're a world-class runner, and you're getting ready to compete in a marathon. The night before the race, you fall and break your leg. Now, they could wheel you to the starting line and try to get you to stand up, and your coach could even give you pointers about how long your stride should be or how you should move your arms. But you aren't going to be able to run with a broken leg, even though you might have all the running talent in the world.

I'm a fan of Tiger's, and I really want him to play well. It's good for all of us if he does.

But I'm also a realist.

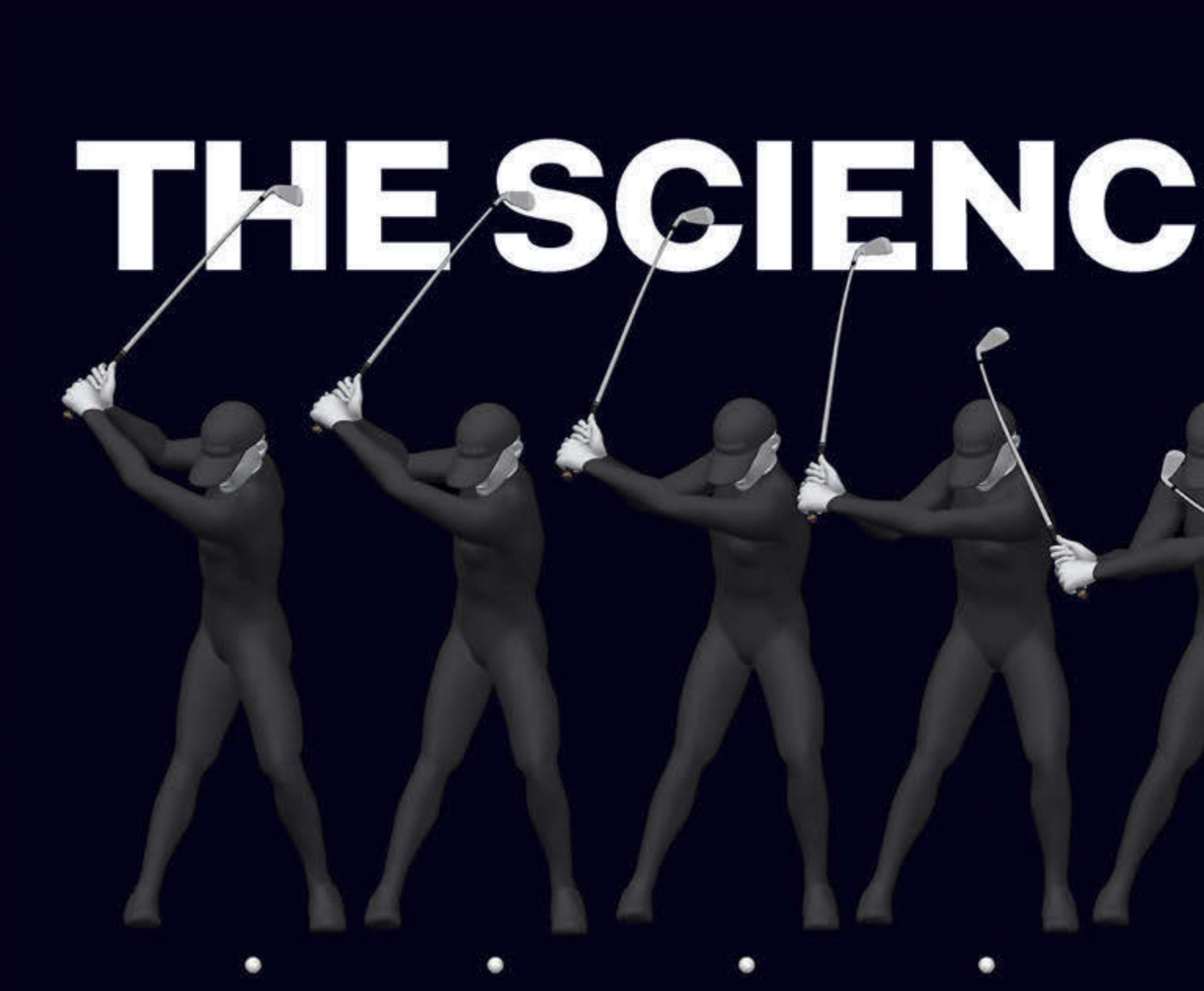
Tiger had a great short game. And he still does have a great short game—when he doesn't yip it. He chipped one in at Torrey Pines in the middle of all this, but even if he has days like that—where it looks to be improving—it doesn't mean the yips are gone. They might go into remission, but they're still in there.

It's just a matter of time before they come out again.

There's no reason for Tiger to play more events until his back is healthy and he has a manageable plan to play around this short-game issue. Confidence is such a big part of the game. If he goes to Augusta and chips the way he has, he's only going to produce more mental scar tissue. It's just not worth the risk. —*with Matthew Rudy*

▸ **HANK HANEY** *taught Tiger Woods from March 2004 to May 2010. In that span, Woods won 39 tournaments worldwide, including six major championships.*

THE SCIENC

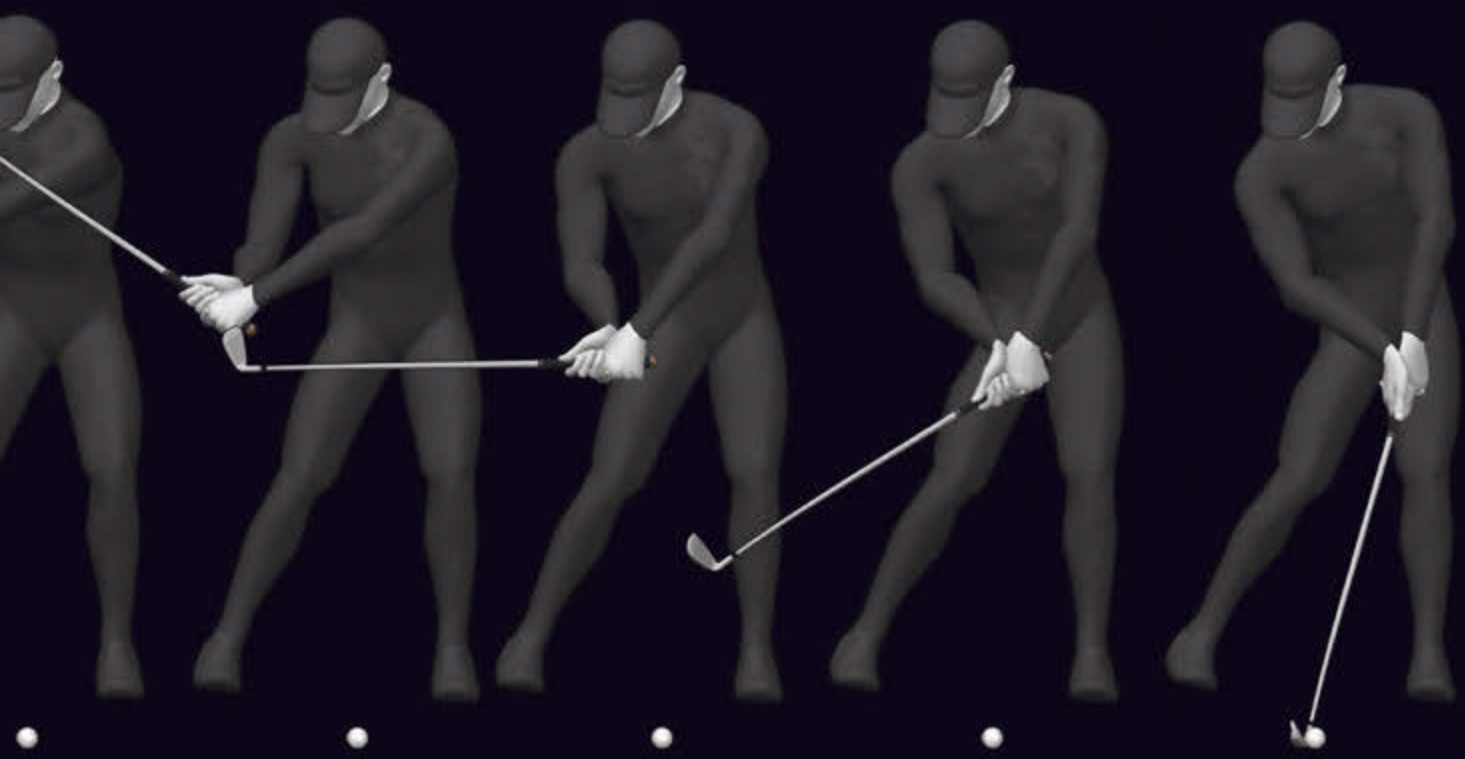


THE TOUR SECRET TO POWER: AMP UP YOUR DOWNSWING

BY BRIAN MANZELLA

Rickie Fowler isn't some physical freak who can bench press 400 pounds and run a 4.4 40. He's 5-foot-9, 150 pounds. But he produces 117 miles per hour of clubhead speed with his driver and can carry the ball 300 yards—and you don't. Why is that? It isn't some magic "it factor" that only great athletes are born with. Thanks to some advanced motion-capture technology and biomechanical research from a few very smart guys, we're starting to get a much clearer picture of how elite players produce power, and what you can do to get some more of it.

E OF SMASH



I vividly remember going to the New Orleans PGA Tour event with my dad 40 years ago, and we'd watch Jack Nicklaus and Tom Watson hit balls on the range. My dad was a big guy and a great athlete, but he couldn't produce anywhere near the same clubhead speed. "Those guys are doing something different," he'd say.

They still are.

To get that seemingly effortless power, tour players aren't just relying on centrifugal force to sling the club through impact on a single plane. They're actively torquing—or twisting—the club in three specific ways during the downswing to help produce those high speeds.

The concept comes from research by Dr. Steven Nesbit, a professor of mechanical engineering at Lafayette College and an expert in mechanism analysis and design. He decoded the pro swing and identified the torques at work.

Using the GEARS Golf system for tracking body and club movement—the same technology that produced the 3-D swing images in this story—we're able to pinpoint the moves that create those torques and compare them from player to player.

To produce peak repeatable speed in a swing, the player needs to use the three torques (or twisting motions) in the correct order and degree. In swing-geek shorthand, we call the torques Alpha, Beta and Gamma, but it might help you to think of them as "Out," "Over" and "Around," because that's how each torque moves the club on the downswing.

These twisting movements are what make a great swing take on its characteristic look. Alpha torque changes the relationship between the club and arms from an L shape at the top of the backswing to more of an I shape near impact. Beta torque sets the club in the right position in relation to the body during the downswing. Gamma torque helps square the clubface. In short, to get from the top to impact powerfully, the club has to move out, over and around—and the three torques make that happen.

Relax—it isn't as complicated as it might sound. The swing issues you have will dictate the torque (or torques) you need to improve. Start with the simple drill that corresponds to the appropriate torque for your issue, and you'll be able to add speed to your swing and start consistently smashing the ball.

—WITH MATTHEW RUDY



MAINTAIN YOUR LEVERAGE

The first torque (Alpha) happens after you move the club down from the top of the backswing to where your left arm is parallel to the ground. It's the unhinging of your wrists in line with the direction the clubhead is moving, in combination with the extending of your right arm. If you're a short hitter who struggles to produce good clubhead speed, this torque is where you want to start. Most players either add Alpha torque too early, throwing the clubhead away from the body, or delay the torque too long in a misguided effort to lag the clubhead behind the hands to store more power for the hit.

DRILL To feel this torque, get in your stance with your right foot about six inches from a wall. From a top-of-the-backswing position, make a slow downswing until the clubhead gets to the wall (*right*). The key to doing it correctly is shifting your lower body to the left while keeping your back turned toward the target enough so you still have leverage to push hard against the wall when the club reaches it. If you hang back on your right side or turn your upper body forward too soon—two common high-handicapper mistakes—you won't have the leverage to push very hard.

'IF YOU'RE A SHORT HITTER, THIS TORQUE IS WHERE YOU WANT TO START.'





PITCH THE CLUB FLATTER

The second torque (Beta) is the movement of the club into a flatter position as you get halfway through the downswing. If you tend to get too steep or over the top, here's where you want to focus. In a good downswing, the lower body shifts left and then the upper body turns and pushes into the left arm, which pitches the club into a slightly flatter, more horizontal position. From there, you can turn hard and use the right side of your body to produce extra speed. As your hands move closer to your body near impact, the club whips in line with your left arm—the bit of turbocharging at the bottom that tour players use to get extra distance.

DRILL Set up with a mirror behind you, on the target line, and make a chest-high backswing. Your right elbow should be higher than your left, the butt of the club pointing just inside the ball, and your weight shifted to the right (*left, top*). From there, flow into the beginning of a downswing by pushing off your right foot, hovering your hands in place. Feel the turning of your chest causing your right arm to work under your left arm, the shaft laying down and the butt of the club pointing outside the ball (*left, bottom*).

'IF YOUR SWING GETS STEEP ON THE WAY DOWN, FOCUS HERE.'



TWIST THE FACE SQUARE

Of the three torques, the third (Gamma) is the simplest. It's the twisting of the grip to open and close the clubface. If you hit a slice, you need to twist the club more coming down. Most players don't know they're supposed to do this—or, if they do, they've turned the club so far open on the backswing that they can't get it back to square at impact.

DRILL To get a visual cue that shows how this torque works, tape a drinking straw along the bottom groove on the clubface of a middle iron so half the straw sticks out past the toe. With a mirror behind you, on the target line, swing down until you see the shaft covering your right forearm. At that point, the straw should be pointing straight up (*right, top*). Move back and forth from this position down to where impact would be, twisting the shaft so the straw points at 45 degrees when your hands get to thigh high (*right, bottom*) and straight away from you at impact. A club's loft can make the face look more open than it is, but the straw shows whether you've squared it.

Golf Digest 50 Best Teacher **BRIAN MANZELLA** is based at English Turn Golf & Country Club in New Orleans.

'IF YOU TEND TO SLICE, YOU NEED TO TWIST THE CLUB MORE INTO IMPACT.'



GOLF TIPS
WITH
MATT KUCHAR

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MY LONG WEEKEND WITH A HIDDEN MICROPHONE

BY KEELY LEVINS



Photographs by Cy Cyr



This is a model, not the author.

The perfect cart girl has a soft smile, but thick skin. All the ruthless flirting and unwanted come-ons—just how bad, and bawdy, does it really get? As a 24-year-old female on the Golf Digest editorial staff, I was the best person to find out. With the tacit cooperation of two courses in Arizona, I went undercover behind the wheel for three days. The names in this story have been changed, but the exchanges with patrons are verbatim, as recorded by the stealthy spy pen that rode shotgun in my front pocket.



The general manager unlocks the beer closet. In a single weekend, this course will go through eight cases of Coors Light, eight cases of Bud Light, four cases of Miller Lite, three cases of Corona and two cases of Pabst Blue Ribbon. Then he introduces my overseer for the day.

"Hi! I'm Sally."

Her curly brown hair bounces as she walks, as do the ruffled layers of her skirt. She's tiny, has a cute smile, and looks about 30. She smirks, clearly loving the secret mission.

"We planned on you riding in the passenger seat of the cart, but we've got these margarita machines, so there isn't space for you," the GM says. Sally flips a switch, and the green and silver metal box violently vibrates and spews a greenish liquid from its spigot. "The guys love it," she says.

Just then a golfer walks by and asks, "Who's the new girl?" Without missing a beat, the GM says, "Keely. She's a trainee."

We hadn't talked about how I'd introduce myself. Three minutes into the mission, and I've almost blown my cover. I smile and shake the golfer's hand. "You're going to love it here," he says.

Sally gives a tour of the cart: Coolers on both sides filled with ice, beer, Gatorade, water and juices, with a snack section above. "It only gets tough when guys start asking for beers that are on different sides," Sally says. "You end up running back and forth a lot."

As crowd-pleasing as it might be for me to ride on Sally's lap, the GM hands me the keys to a regular cart. He flips up the top half of the windshield. "You'll need this. You drive backward on the course."

"Once I got hit three times in one day," Sally giggles.

Our gas-powered carts sputter loudly as we take off. We come upon our first customers almost immediately.

"Well, what do we have here?" These guys are regulars; they know I don't belong. Sally jumps in, "Hi, boys! This is Keely. She's a trainee."

"Keely, I'm John. I'm the nice one, and this is my gay friend Chris." Unoriginal *and* bigoted. I toss them a half-hearted laugh and smile.

"You graduate school?"

"Yes, sir. Finished up last year."

"What'd you study up there at ASU?"

Arizona State University—the second element of my new identity unfolds. I roll with it.

"English."

"Well, good luck getting a job with that," they laugh. Hilarious.

"Can we get you guys something to drink?"

They order, and I help Sally round up the beers. We ask how their round is going. Before they drive away, one turns to me and says, "The new girl's my favorite. I like you, new girl."

Sally parks under a tree and peers through the branches to a tee box 200 yards away. We wait, listening for the tee balls. "It's so hard to tell when they wave," Sally says. "It's like, do you want me to come over, or no? It all comes down to a psychology game, figuring out what the golfer wants. Was that four? I think that was four. Let's go!" She floors it.

After two hours with Sally, I've learned a lot. Most critical is to know if a golfer wants your services. Occasionally they wave you by in disgust, as if you and your loud cart are the reason they're not playing well. If a golfer does want a drink or snack, next is figuring out how to engage. The tone for the conversation is set within the first 30 seconds. Whatever they open with is the way they want the interaction to go. If the guy is going to be nice, he'll be nice from the start; if he's going to flirt, his first sentence will be a gunner. Though the cart girl can set the tone, too. If you immediately divert unwanted attention,



guys usually pick up on that and move on. If you allow naughtiness, it continues.

My mentor on day two, Tracy, promotes it.

The first group we come across, I ask what I've decided will be my staple opener: "How're you playing?"

"Oh, don't worry about him," Tracy says, "He's really good at playing . . . with his balls." The guys erupt. Regulars. This tone of discourse is clearly long established. However, I would like to change the subject. I notice the target of the joke is wearing a Troon North hat.

"Troon, you ever play there?"

"Yeah," he says, then follows with a shockingly crude remark stamped with a wink. The guys laugh. Tracy hands them their morning beers, and I wonder if the man has a mother. (This was the only truly uncomfortable moment in my three days; the vast majority of guys are either just looking for a drink or are casually flirting.)

After Tracy's shift, I spend the afternoon at the snack shack with the head cart girl, Claire. I show her my recording device that looks like a plain pen, which she loves. As she gri-

Please turn to page 170

THE 7 GUYS YOU MEET AS A CART GIRL

You encounter all types of characters operating a beverage cart, but these seven we can typically spot from two fairways over.

THE GENUINE GUY He just wants a drink. He'll ask how your day is going, but his eyes are on the beers.

THE YOUNG GUY He'll try to impress you when he tees off. That shot usually ends up in the trees.

THE JOKESTER His intentions are pure—but his jokes aren't.

THE SILENT ONE Usually paired with the jokester. The only words he utters are "Coors Light" and "Thank you."

THE VACATIONER His morale is so high you feel like you're on vacation, too.

THE MEMBER Has a good relationship with all the cart girls. Easy to talk to and tips well.

THE DRUNKEN FOOL Playing terribly, a little flirty, but surprisingly receptive when you cut him off and offer to call him a cab.



1 PUMA
TITANTOUR NASA definitely knows how to regulate temperature in a piece of wearable gear. Puma put the technology NASA uses in spacesuits in the insole of this shoe, so your feet won't overheat, sweat (or stink). **PRICE** $190.







2 ECCO
BIOM HYBRID 2
Your arch contacts the ground the least, so Ecco made that part of the sole less dense, but the outer part firmer for better traction. **PRICE** $195.



3 FOOTJOY
HYPERFLEX Athletic golf shoes might be popular, but you shouldn't sacrifice stability for a light, sporty shoe. The remedy: Footjoy built a web-like grid on the lightweight mesh upper and added a thin traction-rich outsole. **PRICE** $160.





4 **G/FORE**
GALLIVANTER
Finding the right balance between style *after* the round and not slipping *during* it isn't easy. G/Fore stays true to casual-shoe cool, but now the soles (with three levels of traction) are anything but.
PRICE $225.







5 **OAKLEY**
CIPHER 4 A benefit of Oakley's grit-like traction elements is that they don't get in the way of how your feet move. The channels running through the base allow the sole to flex naturally.
PRICE $150.

GAINING TRACTION

GOLF'S NEW SHOES ARE CHANGING THE LOOK, FEEL AND FIT OF PERFORMANCE

Remember when golf shoes were like combat boots, and you wondered how many rounds it would take to break in a new pair? Had to be at least as far back as 2012. That year, the lightest entry in the Golf Digest Shoe Guide weighed more than 12 ounces. This year, the lightest shoe weighs 25 percent less than that, and the vibe has gotten demonstrably less uptight. Still, that weight shift isn't without real athletic performance, neatly combining flexibility with stability. We call it "athletic." Spikeless or not, "casual" no longer means noncompetitive. **—MARTY HACKEL AND KEELY LEVINS**

Photographs by Justin Fantl



6 SKECHERS
GO GOLF PRO The company's walking shoe heritage and midsole cushioning technology are a natural fit for golf. Input from Matt Kuchar led to a more stable leather upper and better traction on the bottom.
PRICE $140.







7 NEW BALANCE
MINIMUS LX When a company that develops footwear for winning Ironman triathletes designs golf shoes, you know they're going to be light. A trimmed outsole helps reduce even more weight.
PRICE $110.



8 TRUE LINKSWEAR
GAME CHANGER PRO
You know that pressure-point feeling of your spikes underfoot? See that layer of rubber mesh set between the midsole and foot? Problem solved.
PRICE $190.



THE BENEFIT OF LIGHTER, MORE ATHLETIC SHOES? THEY'RE BETTER THAN EVER AT COMBINING STABILITY AND FLEXIBILITY.





9 NIKE
TW '15 Tiger Woods asked Nike for a training-shoe-inspired style for golf. The result is this third-generation TW model with a one-piece woven upper strengthened by synthetic fibers. **PRICE** $200.



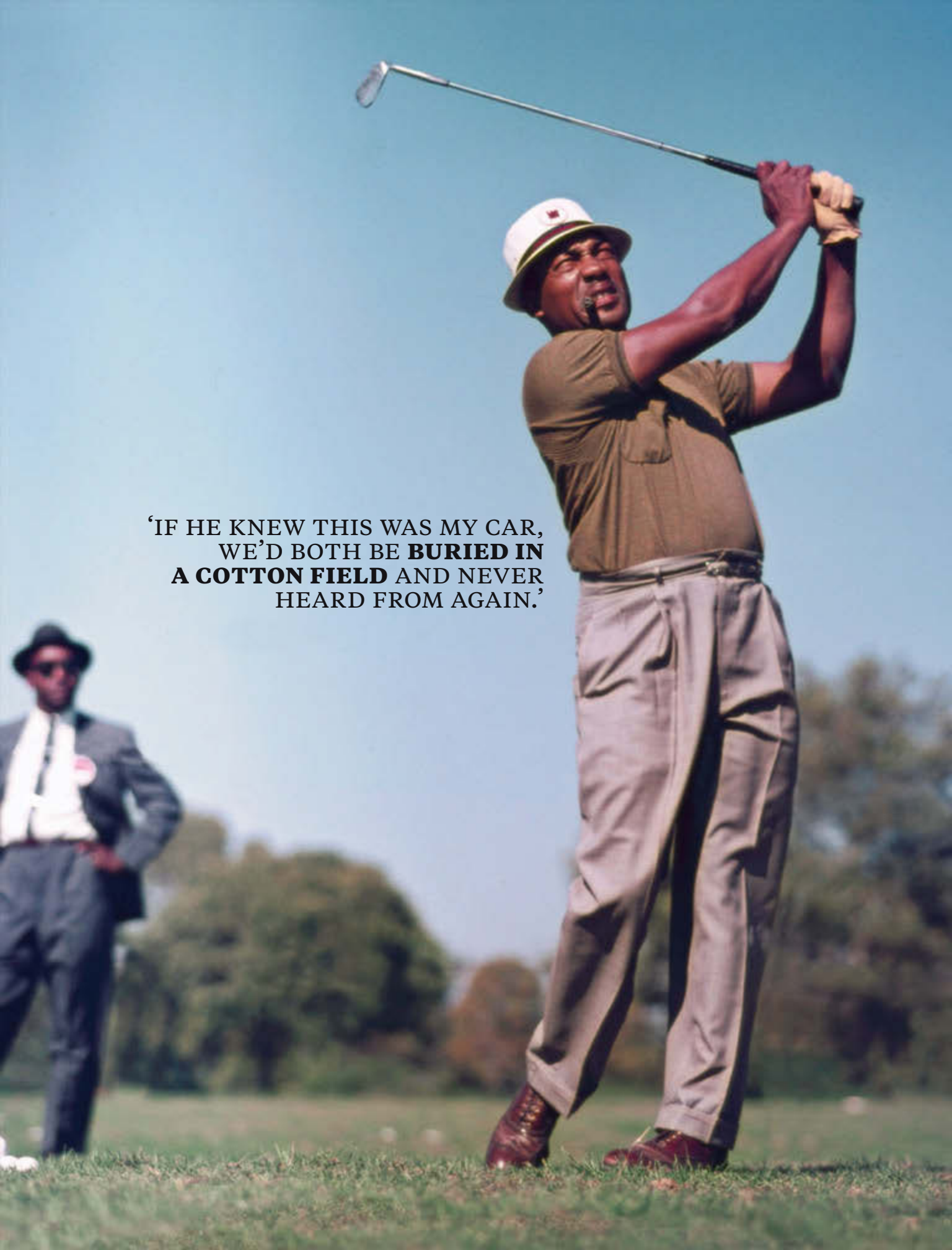


10 CALLAWAY
DEL MAR SPORT How do you make a technical shoe and keep it looking casual? Easy. Hide all the technology under the hood. Beneath the leather upper are enough support systems to keep your feet happy. **PRICE** $100.



11 ADIDAS
ASYM ENERGY BOOST Left and right feet behave differently in the swing. So Adidas built shoes with different spike configurations for each foot to guide your weight transfer, increasing efficiency. **PRICE** $350.





‘IF HE KNEW THIS WAS MY CAR, WE’D BOTH BE **BURIED IN A COTTON FIELD** AND NEVER HEARD FROM AGAIN.’

REMEMBRANCE

A ROUGH RIDE WITH CHARLIE SIFFORD

A HARROWING TRIP IN THE 1960S BROUGHT A PIONEER'S FIGHT INTO FOCUS

BY LARRY MOWRY

▶ **EDITOR'S NOTE:** As Charlie Sifford drifted into the twilight of his life, he began missing the little things. He rued having to give up cigars. He longed for the days of simply feeling good, especially after a heart procedure in 2006. "There's a lot I miss and a lot I don't," he told me that year when I interviewed him for Golf Digest.

One thing Sifford didn't miss was his experience in the early 1960s trying to break through the PGA of America's Caucasian-only clause and become the first African-American golfer to play the PGA Tour. Racist shouts and murmurs never did subside. The death threats he received were real. Not being invited to play in the Masters hurt forever. Some victims of racial discrimination eventually emerge forgiving and philosophical, as baseball's Buck O'Neil seemed to do. That wasn't the case with Sifford. He received an Honorary Doctorate of Law from the University of St. Andrews in 2006 and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2014, but whatever softness was exposed on those two occasions concealed real—and justified—anger until he died at 92 on Feb. 3, 2015.

Talking to Charlie was a gritty, rewarding experience, though he rarely was in good humor. When asked if the memory of the good events in his golf life—he won two tournaments on the PGA Tour and had success as a senior—didn't please him, Sifford replied with a stare from his remaining good eye. "I don't smile much, and I never laugh," he said. "If you'd been through what I've been through, you wouldn't be smiling, either."

Few people knew Sifford better than Larry Mowry, who tried his hand at the PGA Tour in the '60s. "He was a tough man," says Mowry, now 78 and a teaching pro in Atlanta. "I'm reading a lot of stuff about how sweet Charlie was, but the things he went through did not go down well with him. Let's be honest: Charlie could be difficult."

One thing Mowry gained from being around Sifford was empathy. This was expressed in one of the most powerful pieces ever to appear in Golf Digest, a 1988 reminiscence by Mowry. We're reprinting it here, a harrowing trip to another place in time.

—GUY YOCOM

IT WAS SOME TIME back in the 1960s. I don't remember the year, but I had just finished the final round at the Doral Open and was looking to hitch a ride with someone to our next tour stop, in Wilmington, N.C. I had booked a plane reservation for that night, but I wasn't looking forward to it. There would be a long wait for the takeoff, and the planes in those days gave you a low-flying, bumpy ride with landings that would have scared Evel Knievel.

I stashed my bags in the locker room and looked around to see if anyone wanted a co-pilot for the ride to Wilmington. It was a last-minute request, so several guys were already filled up. Finally, a voice from the far end of the putting green rang loud and clear: "I'm looking for a rider." The voice was Charlie Sifford's. "Great, Charlie," I said. "My bags are packed, and I'll be ready when you are."

Charlie walked toward me with a serious look and asked, "Do you know what you're getting into, driving with me?"

I had no idea what he was implying and answered, "No problem, Charlie."

Understand that at the time I was still in my 20s and a pretty naive young man who looked up to Charlie Sifford as a golfer and as a person to admire. His game was better than mine, and the ride to Wilmington with such a fine player was an opportunity to get some high-level tips about this difficult game.

Color doesn't mean much to a professional athlete. Performance is what you admire—and I really admired Charlie's game. The thought that we were in the Deep South during a period when

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'IF YOU'D BEEN THROUGH WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH, **YOU WOULDN'T BE SMILING**, EITHER.'

black and white men didn't ride in cars together never entered the head of this newcomer from San Diego.

Times have changed from the early '60s—not enough for some, and too much for others. But for those who weren't there or don't remember, the following is a chronicle of that automobile trip.

Charlie owned a new Buick Wildcat, white with red interior, wire wheels, etc. It was a beautiful car. Buick gave touring pros a special purchase price then, and many of the better players took advantage of the opportunity.

Charlie was relaxed as we pulled away from the Doral parking lot. "I hope you like to drive straight through," he said.

"Sure, Charlie, as long as you stop for plenty of coffee so we can stay awake. This is a long drive, but I'd like to get there for an extra practice round. I missed the cut last year."

Interstate highways were in the development stages then, and the road map to Wilmington looked as complicated as a pair of New Year's Day eyeballs. When we stopped for coffee, Charlie would always ask me to go get it. I thought nothing of doing it. I got some strange looks in the cafés but blamed it on my loud slacks and white shoes, which seemed out-of-bounds in those greasy spoons.

The night was moonless, and reading road signs was a chore, but we progressed well into south Georgia without error. We stopped for gas at a dimly lit truck stop. "Larry, go get a couple of Cokes; I'll take care of the gas," was Charlie's order. He seemed a little nervous.

Two cops were staring at me as I relieved the Coke machine of two bottles. They were dressed like characters in a B movie: open shirts, hats tilted back and cigars in their mouths. One of them said to me, "You jus' don't care who you drive with, do you, son?"

He had a mean look, and it matched the tone of his voice and the ugly scar on his cheek. I was so intimidated by his appearance that I couldn't utter a word. My lack of response drew a four-letter comment from him, and then both cops walked away from me and toward Charlie and the car.

Soda bottles in hand, I walked back toward the car and overheard their conversation with Charlie. Scarface asked: "Who's car is this, boy—is it yours?" Charlie suddenly put on a high-pitched falsetto voice and said he was "drivin' for mistah Larry."

Scarface seemed satisfied, but the California license plate on "my" car was the next problem. "You better drive slow and steady out of this county, or I'll run you two in," were his parting but somehow welcome words.

Charlie drove very slowly, and we both kept our mouths shut until we crossed the county line. Charlie broke the silence: "If he knew this was my car, we'd both be buried in a cotton field and never heard from again." I wanted to say something but just couldn't find the right words.

Charlie lit his cigar for the first time and placed a small towel across his lap to catch any spilled ashes. "I don't usually smoke in the car, but I just have to light up after that," he said. "He was a tough-looking character, wasn't he, Larry?"

I agreed, and we drove through the darkness, not saying another word, enjoying the music on a tape of his longtime friends, the Mills Brothers. The first song, "Up a Lazy River," was somehow out of place for our mood, but it was relaxing.

By dawn, we were both suffering from eye strain. Restaurants on the old state highway were scarce, and we fought hunger for two hours. "Hey, Charlie," I said, "that looks like a good place to eat." We pulled into the parking lot of a busy, nice-looking restaurant.

Charlie said, "Get me a ham-and-egg sandwich and a cup of coffee to go, will you, Larry?" By now I was no longer naive; the rules were plain to me. Charlie was not allowed to use the same restrooms, drinking fountains or Coke machines as I was. His areas were marked for "Coloreds." Mine were "Whites only." If he were traveling alone, his only means for receiving restaurant food was to go around to the back door, to the kitchen, pay in advance and wait. There were times when the food was not served to him even after he'd paid, and he was expected to leave the grounds quietly and without complaint. Charlie lived in a different country than I did.

I returned to the car with our ham-and-egg sandwiches and coffee. We drove on, eating our breakfast. Each bite I took felt like a grapefruit as I struggled to get it down my throat.

When we arrived in Wilmington it was beautiful with the just-blooming azaleas showing the city as a multicolored delight. I had reservations at the only decent motel in town at that time, right next to a little diner called Whitey's. The name had new meaning to me now, and I joked with Charlie that all the diners from south Georgia to here were Whitey's. "Must be a chain," I said. Charlie laughed and pulled up to the motel office.

I knew the owner of the motel because I had stayed there the previous two years. I noticed my name on the reservation sheet, but he gave me no answer when I said, "Reservation for Mowry?" He just stood there, ignoring me and glaring at Charlie. "Sir, he's not staying with me," I said. "He just gave me a ride." I was too tired to get irritated.

"Oh, yes, Mr. Mowry. Good to see you again. Your room is ready and waiting for you."

I unloaded my bags from Charlie's car, thanked him for the ride and wished him luck in the tournament.

Back inside, I lay on my bed in total exhaustion. I was no longer a rookie.

I waited years to unveil this experience because Charlie Sifford would have taken harsh exception to a tell-it-like-it-was story. Times have changed, and for those of us who think life is difficult now, try walking in the shoes of Charlie Sifford in the late '50s and early '60s.

PETER GREGOIRE



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OPENING CREDITS

A FRESH LOOK AT AUGUSTA NATIONAL'S FRONT 9

▸▸▸

THE BACK NINE AT AUGUSTA NATIONAL DESERVES ALL THE GLORY IT GETS. All that water. All that drama. All those fantastic finishes. But consider the beguiling opening nine, as displayed here *by Nathan Fox*, the latest illustrator to provide first impressions of the place and the people that make the Masters. ▸ The truth is, the front started as the back: After the inaugural Augusta National Invitation Tournament, the nines were reversed. The change, in part, was required by topography: Frost is slower to dissipate on the lower portion of the course, requiring the shift so morning rounds could start on time. The result? To our eye, timeless.

Illustrations by Nathan Fox



WALK THIS WAY
Players smell birdie or eagle—or double eagle, if they're Louis Oosthuizen in 2012—at the par-5 **second** hole.


MASTE



WINDOW TO THE WORLD
Players from 39 nations have been featured on the leader board next to the **first** hole, eagled five times in Masters history (including Roberto De Vicenzo, on his birthday in 1968).

M '15



9 QUESTIONS FOR THIS YEAR'S MASTERS

by Jaime Diaz

1

Is it still true that, as Dan Jenkins first wrote, "The Masters doesn't start until the back nine on Sunday?"

The pressure of the green jacket and five holes with water always lent truth to that insight, but it has become less true. When Augusta was shorter and wider, going for back-nine par 5s was more prevalent, increasing the chances of large stroke swings. Byron Nelson going 2-3 on the par-3 12th and par-5 13th holes in 1937 to Ralph Guldahl's 5-6 turned Nelson's four-stroke deficit into a two-stroke lead and began a narrative that was followed by Arnold Palmer, Gary Player and Jack Nicklaus in their most memorable wins. The tournament seemed to lose some of its volatility after 460 yards were added from 2002-'06. However, the club responded by making the back-nine par 5s more accessible on Sundays, and Charl Schwartzel (2011), Bubba Watson (2012) and Adam Scott (2013) all made extended late birdie runs on their way to victories.

2

What are Tiger Woods' chances for victory?

Zero if his early-season chipping problems persist or recur, or if his latest absence from the game includes missing the tournament.

3

What would be the best story?

Woods somehow winning the Masters for the fifth time, his first major-championship victory since the 2008 U.S. Open, and restarting his quest toward Nicklaus' record of 18 major-championship wins.

4

What would be the second-best story?

Rory McIlroy winning his first green jacket to complete the career Grand Slam, giving him three legs of a Rory Slam and leaving no doubt that golf has entered the McIlroy Era.

5

Do left-handed players have a real advantage at the Masters?

Yes. Left-handers have won six of the past 12 Masters. Before that, no left-hander had won the tournament. The biggest reason, besides the obvious talent of three-time champion Phil Mickelson and two-time winner Bubba Watson, is the technology of the modern driver. Because the titanium clubheads of the past decade have dramatically reduced the spin imparted to the ball, the power fade has become more advantageous than it used to be. The heavier spin on pre-titanium fades would cost a lot of distance compared to draws, but that gap has closed, and the safer fade has become the go-to shot for long hitters. At Augusta, the favored ball flight off the tee is still right to left, the direction of a left-handed fade. Watson especially has been able to use a very long and surprisingly accurate power fade as his main advantage over the competition.

HALFWAY HOME
The par-4 **ninth** concludes the front, where Masters fields have averaged 36.89 strokes over the years (versus 37.14 on the back).

6

What's the next big alteration that should be made to the course?

Remove the bentgrass on the greens and replace it with the same Champion ultradwarf Bermuda that has been installed at Pinehurst No. 2. It would make the course more interesting by creating firmer greens (with almost no ball marks) that could also putt slightly slower. Better shotmaking would be rewarded, more aggressive putting would be encouraged, and more hole locations would be possible. The club's leadership position in the game would be strengthened because the prevalence of shorter second putts would speed up play, and the more environmentally friendly grass would require less water.

7

What is it about the course that allows such a mix of players of varying ages to contend?

Because the course has always rewarded power, aggressive younger players can go low. In 2009, Anthony Kim, then 23, made a record 11 birdies in a second-round 65. Though supreme talents like Nicklaus, Woods and Seve Ballesteros were able to win the tournament at 23 or younger, youth tends to give way to experience at Augusta. In 1979, Fuzzy Zoeller became only the third player to win on his first attempt (after Horton Smith and Gene Sarazen in the tournament's first two years). Youthful power has created plenty of excitement and some 54-hole leads (like McIlroy's ill-fated four-stroke edge in 2011). But in part because the Masters is always played on the same course, accumulated knowledge of efficient strategies and correct green reading play a bigger role than at other majors.

8

What's the worst hole on the course?

To some, it's the seventh, which has been stretched to 450 yards, too long for the narrow fairway and the size of the green. It's a problem that can be solved by moving the tees up. A harder fix is the fourth. The right half of the green is much too shallow for a hole of 240 yards, and the hole is generally dull visually.

9

What is the best hole?

It's still the par-5 13th, even though after an incredible drive Bubba Watson had only a sand wedge for his second shot in the final round last year. Par is irrelevant: The gorgeous dogleg left is as good a hole as there is in tournament golf because the first, second and third shots so often create the opportunity for an artistic and spectacular (or disastrous) stroke.

M'15 OPEN

The only way to match a perfect round is with a perfect lap.

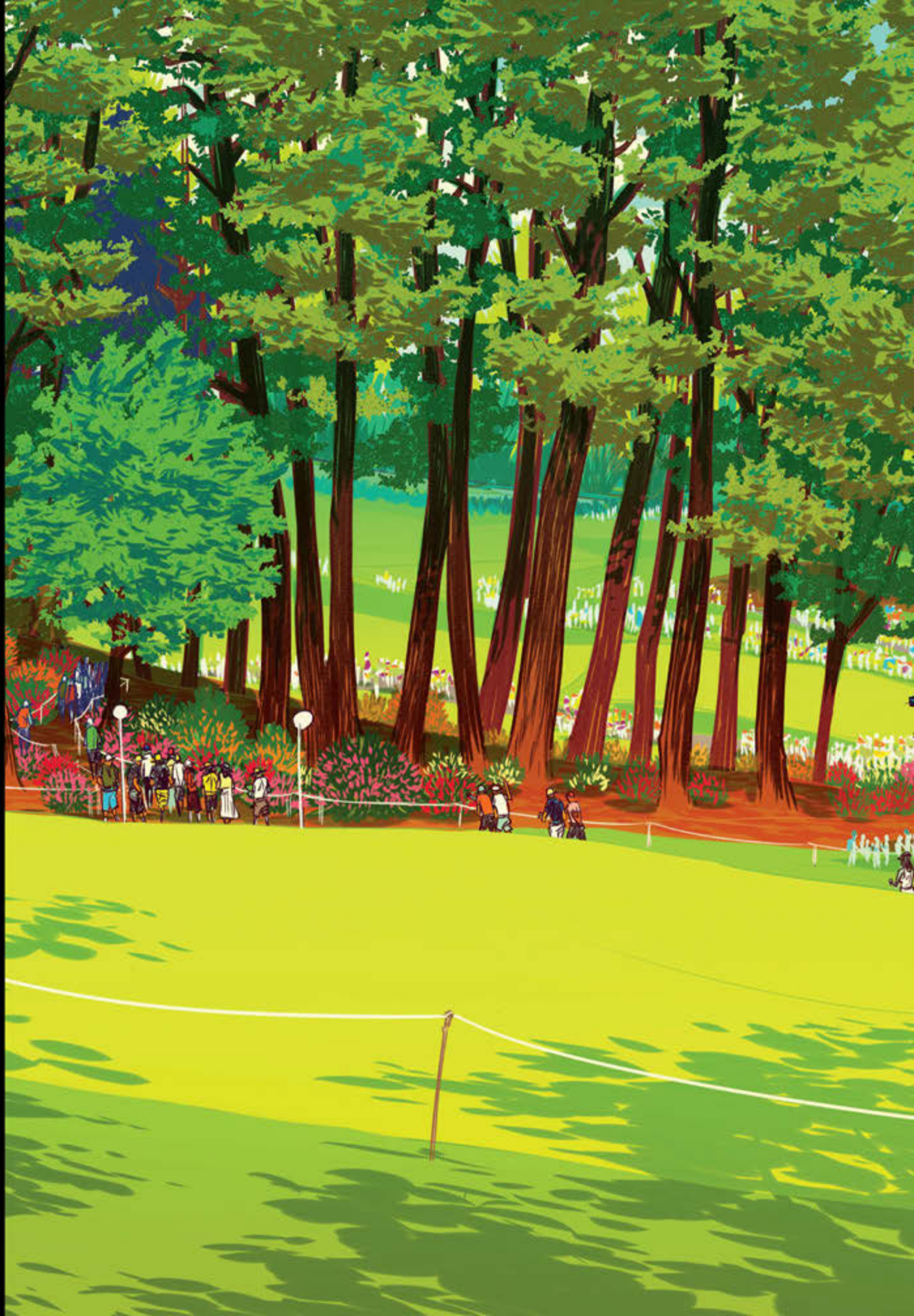
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DOWNSTAIRS UPSTAIRS

The par-5 **second** hole is 575 yards down the hill; the par-5 eighth (*far left, through the trees*) is 570 yards back up the hill.

▸ ▸ ▸

LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

There are no greenside bunkers at the **eighth**, but experienced competitors know not to miss left of that big mound.





THE STORY OF RORY

HE'S **CHISELED**, HE'S **FOCUSED** AND HE'S **READY** TO GO FOR THE **CAREER SLAM**

BY JAIME DIAZ

Illustration by Nigel Buchanan

A M '15

mid the steel beams and industrial chic of a vast Chelsea Piers gym on the West Side of Manhattan, Rory McIlroy is right at home—high-tech fitness shirt straining across his broad back, vein-popping forearms, sharply defined jawline, curly locks cropped close. Everything is sleek, strong and stylish. McIlroy is 25, and the mop-haired, slightly puffy, rosy-cheeked cherub who a few years ago couldn't stand on one leg for more than a few seconds is gone. ▸ McIlroy is in full workout regalia in one of his favorite cities not because he's meeting his sport scientist/trainer, Dr. Stephen McGregor, for one of their intense 90-minute sessions, but because he's doing a photo shoot for the brand of headphones he endorses. But when an assistant brings a spray bottle to McIlroy to simulate perspiration, the world No. 1 politely declines before hopping on a spinning cycle to churn hard for a full five minutes. The moisture he raises could have been produced with a few well-placed spritzes, but McIlroy is pleased by the authenticity of his effort. With the same playful pride from the week before, when he tweeted a photo of himself lifting 280 pounds, accompanied by the message, *Better never stops*, he points to his damp shirt and says, "That's earned."

There is no zealot like a convert, and these days McIlroy is willing to invest whatever sweat equity will get him to the highest reaches of excellence. Last year McIlroy got busy like no other time in his life, following the direction of McGregor, swing instructor Michael Bannon and putting coach Dave Stockton. Even more, McIlroy reawakened his passion for golf. "It's what I think about when I get up in the morning," he said after winning the British Open at Hoylake. "It's what I think about when I go to bed."

That mind-set might have evolved slowly, but history will mark it as the moment McIlroy publicly broke off his engagement with Caroline Wozniacki May 21 at the BMW PGA Championship at Wentworth. Five days later, when he came from seven shots down in the final round to get his first win in Europe or America in 18 months, he appeared a new man.

Even after the victory, McIlroy was understandably subdued. But it wasn't long before he set a new course.

"After [the breakup], I thought, *What else do I have in my life?*" he says during lunch at the downtown Standard, High Line. "*I have family and friends, but they're always going to be there. What else?* That's when I decided, *You know what, I'm just going to immerse myself in golf for a while*. I spent more time at it, thought about it more, spent more time at the range and at the gym. Because that's all I had, and that's all I wanted to do."

RORY MCILROY/TWITTER



▸ MCILROY TAKES ON 280 POUNDS, THEN TWEETED THE PHOTO WITH THE MESSAGE, *BETTER NEVER STOPS*.

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▸ FROM LEFT: RORY WORKING ON HIS SAND GAME AT AGE 2; WITH HIS DAD, GERRY; STICKING THE FOLLOW-THROUGH; WITH NICK FALDO AFTER A VICTORY IN THE FALDO JUNIOR SERIES IN 2006; WITH RICKIE FOWLER IN THE 2007 WALKER CUP.







McIlroy takes a forkful of his Atlantic salmon with a side of Brussels sprouts, a meal approved by McGregor, and explains how as a golfer, he has become decidedly anti-slacker.

"I've come across enough successful people now to know that the best in whatever walk of life, they're the ones who just work the hardest. I realized that if I want to be the best and fulfill my potential, I'm going to have to do the same thing. And for those who are lucky enough to be born with a gift and then choose to work the hardest—I mean, that's the combination."

AFTER A MONSTER 2014, BIGGER GOALS IN 2015

In 2014, the payoff was big: two major-championship wins, one grinded out on the links at Hoylake, the other won with a desperate sprint from behind in the PGA at Valhalla. In their way, both were more impressive and confidence-building than his eight-stroke victories at the 2011 U.S. Open and 2012 PGA, which were blinding blasts of pure talent that testify to McIlroy's ability to dominate when he's on. But those first two major victories did not truly test him in a final-nine crucible. For good measure last year, McIlroy administered a no-mercy 5-and-4 beating of friend and rival Rickie Fowler in Ryder Cup singles, a match in which McIlroy started six under through six holes.

This year, the payoff target is even bigger: victory at the Masters, which would give McIlroy the career Grand Slam, his third major in a row, and a chance at the Rory Slam in the U.S. Open at Chambers Bay.

At first glance, McIlroy should be the favorite at Augusta. The kind of driving he exhibited at Hoylake and Valhalla—where he led the fields with averages of 328 yards and 316 yards, displaying the best seen in back-to-back major championships since Tiger Woods won the 2000 U.S. and British Opens—has been a key determiner at the Masters. McIlroy dominated the PGA Tour last year in strokes gained/driving, and the player who finished second was Bubba Watson, who has ridden his driver to two of the past three green jackets.

But there is evidence to support why McIlroy might not win at Augusta. In his six Masters, last year's T-8 is his best finish (*see chart*). In those 22 rounds, he has made an astounding 11 double bogeys and three triple bogeys. Just as amazing, considering McIlroy's length, his cumulative total on the par 5s is only 21 under. Although scattershot short irons have been responsible for most of his big numbers, McIlroy has had trouble on the iconic greens, consistently finishing in the bottom half of the field in putting.

"A firm and fast Augusta, or a typical U.S. Open setup, is probably the most difficult test for me," he says. "It requires so much discipline and precision, and that's something I'm still learning. I won a U.S. Open, but it was much wetter than normal, and even Hoylake was soft for a links. So if Augusta is fiery, winning there would get me closer to being a complete player, because I don't think I'm there yet."

That's a measure of how much better McIlroy believes he can become. Another wrinkle is the way he celebrates rather than squelches the memory of his worst day in golf, the final round of the 2011 Masters, which he entered with a four-stroke lead but shot 80 to finish T-15.

"It was the most important day of my career, bar none," McIlroy said in January. "I learned what I shouldn't do when I'm in that situation again." Indeed, the next major, he won by eight strokes at Congressional, finishing with a 69.

TRUSTING THE THREE WISE MEN

Since then, and especially lately, there has been a lot McIlroy has learned he should do. In particular, trusting the wisdom and guidance of the performance experts who advise him.

The most cutting edge is McGregor, 41, an Englishman with a Ph.D. in exercise physiology who has worked with the New York Knicks and the Manchester City soccer team and directed Lee Westwood's physical transformation. McGregor started working with McIlroy in 2010, when the golfer began experiencing lower back pain.

"When we started, Rory had never done any physical training," McGregor said while following McIlroy at the Australian Open last November. McGregor has designed regimens—90-minute sessions 10 times a week—that primarily strengthen McIlroy's core and lower body but which have dramatically improved his overall fitness. "Rory possesses hyperflexibility and has extraordinary hip speed," McGregor says. "To get more control and consistency, he needed to build body stability."

The trainer, who is a casual golfer, works closely with Bannon to see what swing adjustments the instructor is implementing. "We find out the golf swing he wants to achieve and change his body accordingly," McGregor says. McIlroy confirms that his improvement—a 5-mile-per-hour increase in clubhead speed since 2010, up to 121.56 mph, with more consistency—has come from his body getting stronger and faster rather than through any changes in technique.

"My swing has lost its whippy sort of action that came from a lot of arm and hand speed," he says. "Now it's more the big muscles controlling rotation, and that's the energy that's going into the ball."

Bannon has been McIlroy's only swing coach since the two began working together at Holywood Golf Club outside Belfast when Rory was 8. With a kindly, soft-spoken manner and a visage that evokes Paul Newman in "The Verdict," the 56-year-old father of four says, "I have no idea why our chemistry has worked. I just like Rory. And I love to help him play the kind of golf he can."

Bannon was a good player in Northern Ireland—he lost a playoff to Padraig Harrington in the 1997 Irish Professional Championship—but made his name teaching promising juniors at Bangor Golf Club. (Since 2012, he has worked full-time for McIlroy.) In the video studio of the club, Bannon pulls out old tapes of his charges, including one of a certain ruddy-faced 8-year-old.

"Always a happy man, Rory," Bannon says of the smiling figure swinging a cut-down iron. On the tape, the instructor can be heard to gently implore, "Now hold your balance at the finish," which is the mantra behind McIlroy's ability to repeatedly stick his majestic

"I HAD THIS ABILITY GIVEN TO ME, BUT IT WAS SORT OF LIKE, "WHY ME?" "
—RORY MCILROY

FROM LEFT: RORY MCILROY/TWITTER (2) • ALAN LEWIS/PHOTOPRESSBELFAST.CO.UK • RICHARD HEATHCOTE/GETTY IMAGES • PETER MUHLY/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

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CLOSING IN ON THE CAREER GRAND SLAM

▸ After winning the Open at Hoylake (*top*), Rory McIlroy needs a Masters victory to become the sixth male golfer to win the career Grand Slam. A win at Augusta National would be his third major victory in a row, setting up a chance at matching Tiger Woods' four consecutive major wins in 2000-'01.

Name (major wins)	Masters	U.S. Open	British Open	PGA Ch.
Jack Nicklaus (18)	1963	1962	1966	1963
	1965	1967	1970	1971
	1966	1972	1978	1973
	1972	1980		1975
	1975			1980
	1986			
Tiger Woods (14)	1997	2000	2000	1999
	2001	2002	2005	2000
	2002	2008	2006	2006
	2005			2007
Ben Hogan (9)	1951	1948	1953	1946
	1953	1950		1948
		1951		
		1953		
Gary Player (9)	1961	1965	1959	1962
	1974		1968	1972
	1978		1974	
Gene Sarazen (7)	1935	1922	1932	1922
		1932		1923
				1933

MISSING A MAJOR (one short of the Slam, with major win totals):
Masters: Walter Hagen (11), Jim Barnes (4), Lee Trevino (6), McIlroy (4)
U.S. Open: Sam Snead (7), Phil Mickelson (5)
British Open: Byron Nelson (5), Raymond Floyd (4)
PGA Championship: Tom Watson (8), Arnold Palmer (7)
RORY AT AUGUSTA **T-20** in 2009 (72-73-71-70), **MC** in 2010 (74-77), **T-15** in 2011 (65-69-70-80), **T-40** in 2012 (71-69-77-76), **T-25** in 2013 (72-70-79-69), **T-8** in 2014 (71-77-71-69). **Scoring average**: 72.36

follow-through. "There was nothing that was good at 8 that I took out," Bannon says. "I always wanted him to go away from a lesson with just one thing, not loads of things. Rory listened to everything and was very good at taking the lesson home and coming back having learned."

These days, "I keep an eye out," Bannon says. "Mostly small things. He can get a little off with his takeaway, lift it outside or pull it inside, or overcorrect either way. But when he gets his lines, he's pretty hard to contend with."

The mystic on the team is Stockton, 73, who has worked directly with McIlroy about a dozen times since they first met a few weeks after the 2011 Masters. "I told him he was lifting out of his crouch and moving too quickly to the ball," says the two-time PGA Championship winner, who emphasizes the importance of seeing the line and "walking into" a putt rhythmically. "He corrected that at Congressional."

Stockton's interactions with McIlroy have usually consisted of passing along musings on demeanor and walking pace, with only minimal work on the stroke, although McIlroy uses the Stockton-endorsed concept of "spot putting," rolling his ball over a visual spot about an inch in front of the ball.

Last season, McIlroy served as his own putting coach, with Stockton on call if needed. On the PGA Tour, McIlroy went from 117th in strokes gained/putting to 41st. "He told me, 'I've got it. I'm a good putter.' And he is," Stockton says. "He's the easiest student I've ever had because he needs next to nothing technically. As long as he keeps himself in the right frame of mind, I don't think putting is ever going to be an issue for him. What I see now is Rory having put things together mentally. As physically gifted as he is, I think the other players are in a world of hurt."

There's little doubt McIlroy is perceived as a tougher, more mature, more prepared, more clutch player than he was before. Though the aesthetics of his game have always drawn raves, from Johnny Miller citing the "Adonis follow-through" to Geoff Ogilvy's opining that

'COULD I HAVE WORKED HARDER AND WON MORE MAJORS? PROBABLY. COULD I HAVE DRIVEN MYSELF CRAZY DOING IT? ABSOLUTELY.'
—JACK NICKLAUS

"Rory's shots make the best noise, more flush even than Tiger's at his best," the book on McIlroy among peers was that he lacked the grit to grind out victories when he wasn't "on." But with last summer's performance, McIlroy has earned locker-room cred. "Rory's got guts," says Jim Furyk. "He doesn't back down."

McIlroy is being seen as the kind of special player who can summon the will to seize the biggest moments. Augusta will be one of those, and if McIlroy pulls off the victory for the career Slam, he'll join Gene Sarazen, Ben Hogan, Gary Player, Jack Nicklaus and Woods in a most exclusive club.

ACCEPTING HIS GENIUS

Like Bobby Jones, another amiable prodigy who had some lean years in his early 20s, McIlroy is a complex bundle of contradictions who, as he confesses, took a while to reconcile the power and price of his genius.

"Until just a few years ago, I don't want to say I felt guilty for being successful because I had this ability given to me, but it was sort of like, 'Why me?' " he says. "Because I felt like it's a very selfish thing to be a winner, a very selfish trait. Which is what you sort of need in golf. And I guess it just took me a while to be comfortable with that, just because of the personality I have. I realized that if I want to succeed in golf, which I do, I need to have it. What helped was realizing how much

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▸ FROM LEFT: CELEBRATING AT THE 2011 U.S. OPEN AT CONGRESSIONAL; WITH CAROLINE WOZNIACKI AT THE 2013 PAR-3 CONTEST; WOZNIACKI'S SNAP OF A SLEEPING RORY; THE FINAL-ROUND 80 IN THE 2011 MASTERS; PARTYING WITH TOUR PRO STEPHEN GALLACHER AT THE 2014 RYDER CUP.







people like winners, how people gravitate to them. So if other people are happy for me winning, then why can I not be?"

After a sip of a diet cola—"my treat"—he continues.

"Now I want to win at golf all the time. I feel like golf has allowed me to be competitive at something in life—and my fitness has become part of that—and I feel like I've developed a bit of a ruthless streak on the golf course over the last few years. But I've no real ambition to be the best at anything else. If we're playing a game of cards, or a game of pool, or whatever it is, I'd happily let someone win just to keep them happy."

Such talk by a professional athlete in a culture that reveres 24-7 competitors nearly begs for an intervention led by Michael Jordan. But McIlroy is very close to his father, Gerry, a bartender whose credo is, "It's nice to be nice, and it doesn't cost you a penny." The people-pleasing example stuck, even though the increasing demands of his station can seem like a bottomless pit. "It's a natural tendency for me to be too nice," Rory says. "To be a little too giving to be able to focus on what you need to do, and sometimes I have to cut that back." Here he mentions his mother, Rosie, an introvert to his father's extrovert. "Sometimes," Rory says, "I wish I had a little more of my mum's reserve."

In January, when a McIlroy tweet defended Seahawks running back Marshawn Lynch's recalcitrance with the media—*Love this! Paid to play, not answer questions*—it seemed a way of venting about the claustrophobic coverage of his dating life and the rest of his off-course activity and commitments. "Time has become his most precious commodity," says Brian McIlroy, one of Rory's uncles. "He is absolutely delighted on those days when there is nothing he has to do."

One thing that had threatened to take a great deal of time was McIlroy's lawsuit against his former management at Horizon Sports, which claimed that he was coerced into signing an "unconscionable" contract at a Christmas party. Horizon countersued, claiming breach of contract for unpaid fees.

In early February, on the eve of a trial that was estimated to last six weeks and possibly longer, the parties settled, with McIlroy agreeing to pay an undisclosed sum. According to Golf Digest's Ron Sirak, McIlroy has earned more than $125 million on and off the course through last year. In 2014 alone, he made more than $49 million.

"He isn't afraid of the lawsuit, however it goes," Brian McIlroy said in December. "Rory told me, 'I want it to sting. It will remind never to make that same mistake again.' "

McIlroy has remained cooperative with the media, and often expansive in his press conferences. He continues a sure touch with small grace notes, sending thank-you cards to pro-am partners and tournament officials, and he tips locker-room and security people personally with no regard for how he played. Says longtime Florida golf executive Andy O'Brien: "If you asked the cart guys at the Bear's Club who their favorite is among all the sports-celebrity members, it would be Rory, unanimously. He's the real deal when nobody's watching."

Is he being too nice? It raises the question that pertained to Arnold Palmer in his heyday: Will the very thing people love about McIlroy keep him from being what they—and he—most want him to be, a great winner?

'IF YOU ASKED THE CART GUYS AT THE BEAR'S CLUB WHO THEIR FAVORITE IS AMONG ALL THE SPORTS-CELEBRITY MEMBERS, IT WOULD BE RORY, UNANIMOUSLY. HE'S THE REAL DEAL WHEN NOBODY'S WATCHING.'

—ANDY O'BRIEN

Just as McIlroy is welcomed in some quarters as a respite from the imperial edge of the Woods era, so is he doubted for lacking the same quality. Ironically, probably no other current player has scrutinized Woods more than McIlroy. He happily presented himself as a "Tiger Woods expert" during a 2009 interview with CNN.

"I studied him a lot—a lot," McIlroy says. "I mean, his instruction book, *How I Play Golf*—when my dad was driving me all over Ireland for boys tournaments, I would sit in the front seat and just read that thing. It was my bible. I know every major Tiger's ever won, where he's won them, how many he won by, who finished second."

The two have become friends, occasionally playing rounds together at the Medalist in Florida. Observers report that they like to needle. After Greg Norman suggested in 2012 that Woods was intimidated by McIlroy, Tiger playfully began calling Rory "The Intimidator."

"He's great with me," McIlroy says. "He's very . . . actually, he wants to help. He's like, 'I know you're getting into the same sort of position as me, so anything you need to know, we've been through it all.' "

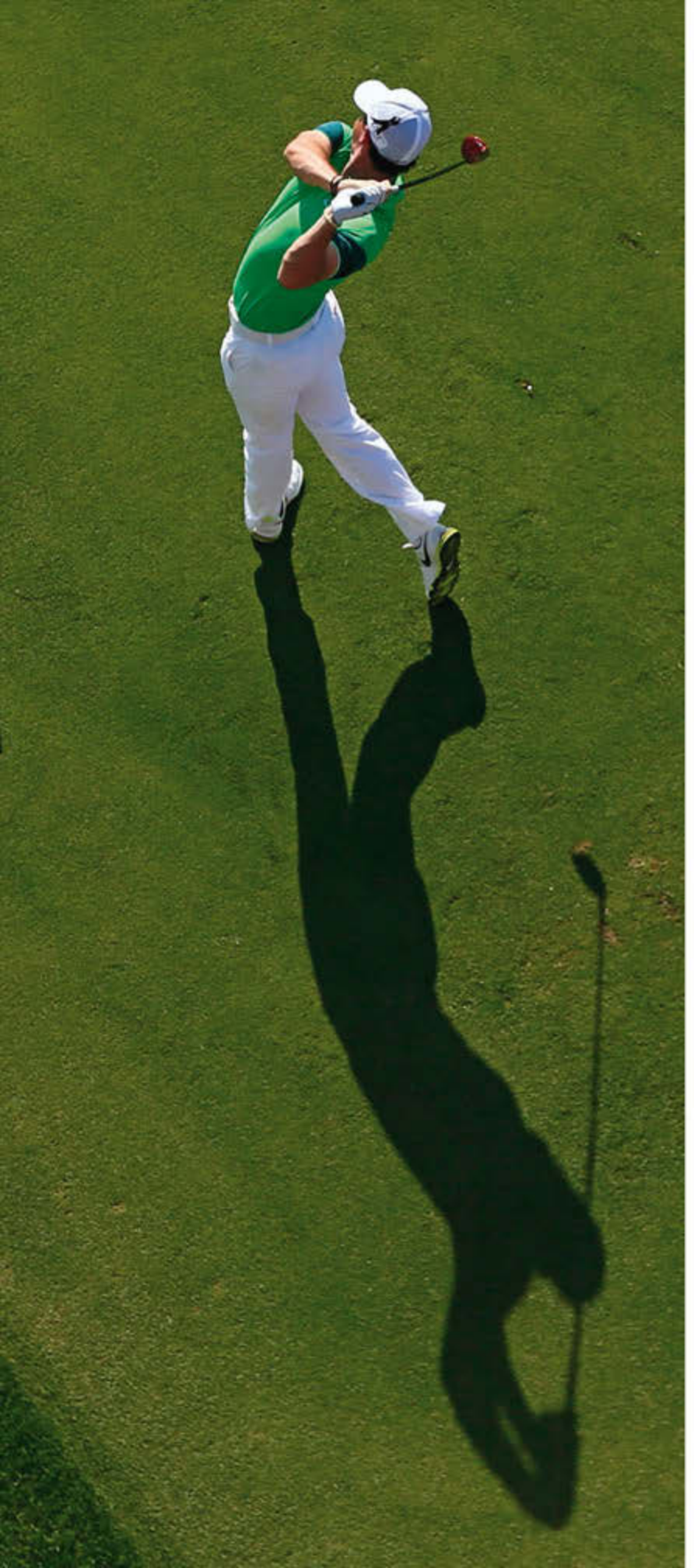
LEARNING FROM NICKLAUS

Though McIlroy has used Woods' example as near-equal parts inspiration and cautionary tale, he has more actively sought the counsel of Nicklaus, who likes being a sounding board, just as Bobby Jones enjoyed imparting wisdom when Jack and his father would visit him at the Masters in the '60s. By McIlroy's and Nicklaus' accounts, conversations have been lively on a wide range of topics. But perhaps because things change, they haven't discussed McIlroy's goals.

"Rory is good enough to achieve whatever he wants in his career, but I don't know what Rory really wants—he hasn't told me, and I haven't asked," Nicklaus says. "He may be fairly happy to go along and win one major here, another major there, or he may want to work really hard and win a bunch. In my career, those goals fluctuated. Every player's got to find his balance between ambition and sanity. Now, were major championships my focus? Yes. Were they my sole focus in life? No—my family was always before that. Could I have worked harder and won more majors? Probably. Could I have driven myself crazy doing it? Absolutely. The choices a player makes are personal, and they evolve with life. And Rory will make his."

For now, McIlroy has chosen to work hard and win often. But

THIS PAGE, FROM LEFT: STEPHEN SZURLEJ • J.D. CUBAN • CAROLINE WOZNIACKI/TWITTER · CHARLES LABERGE • RORY MCILROY/INSTAGRAM • FACING PAGE: KARIM SAHIB/AFP/GETTY IMAGES



5 TIPS FOR WORLD DOMINATION

WHAT CAN YOU TAKE FROM RORY'S SWING?
Based on his work with instructor Michael Bannon and trainer Steve McGregor, here are five concepts Rory has focused on—and how they can work for you.

1 PERFECT THE FIRST FEW FEET

In 2012-'13, Rory got in the habit of starting the club back to the outside. To compensate, he would sometimes drop it too far to the inside on the downswing. In fixing this move, he'd overdo it the other way: a big inside-to-outside move. "I want him to swing his hands straight back for the first few feet, with the clubface looking at the ball, then let his body rotation take the club behind him," Bannon says. Try Rory's two-step drill: Swing the club back to hip high with your arms, stop, then turn your body to complete the backswing.

2 OBEY YOUR NATURAL RHYTHM

Great rhythm was something Bannon noticed in Rory early on and was careful never to tamper with. He says Rory's swing is a great model for flow. "It has a start and a finish, and no bits and pieces in between. It has no kinks." Many golfers see the swing in segments, and their rhythm suffers. By making a lot of freewheeling swings, especially when working on mechanical changes, you can preserve your natural rhythm. "Whatever Rory does," Bannon says, "he never loses the basic rhythm with it."

3 START SMOOTH FROM THE TOP

Another move Rory has worked on is a quiet transition. "The lower body brings the club down, then you can hit it hard," Bannon says. He's referring to the lateral move toward the target that starts the downswing. Rory used to drive his knees too aggressively, and the club would fall behind him. He now thinks of it as a small shift forward before the left knee quickly turns out of the way. Amateurs tend to try to hit the ball hard from the top with the upper body. Do as Rory does: Shift your lower body forward, then fire your arms through.

4 ALWAYS STICK THE FINISH

On tapes of childhood lessons with Rory, Bannon can be heard saying, "Hold your balance at the finish." To this day, one of the hallmarks of Rory's swing is the way he sticks the follow-through. Bannon says it's a good idea to think only about making a good finish: balance and pose. That can't happen without a lot of other good things happening first. It's also one of the easiest swing thoughts you can hold in your mind.

5 FIND YOUR WEAKEST LINK

Five years ago, McGregor did a comprehensive evaluation of Rory's body, identifying the weak parts as his legs and core. He designed an intensive program, and Rory has put in the work. Without any changes in technique, Rory's swing improved. McGregor says Rory's arms and hands used to move very quickly relative to his body, but now his swing is regulated by his big muscles, so the body and arms move together. It's a more efficient motion. Take a tip from Rory: Get your body working better, and your swing will follow.

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The Glenlivet Master of Scotch Peter Karras, Golf Digest Senior Writer Guy Yocom, The Glenlivet Brand Director Laurent Cutier and Golf Digest Art Director Dan McIntyre



The star of the evening was The Glenlivet Archive 21.

Images courtesy Jakub Kellar'k, Jakub Stodres

An Evening of Scotch and Golf Legends

On January 13, The Glenlivet hosted a Scotch pairing and evening of golf storytelling with Golf Digest Senior Writer Guy Yocom at Aretsky's Patroon in New York City. Yocom regaled invited guests with anecdotes from his 30 years of writing about the world's best players while Master of Scotch Peter Karras presented three famous Glenlivet expressions dating back to 1994.

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for how long? After he broke up with Wozniacki, he told himself to "immerse myself in golf for a while." Could that mean his increased commitment will be short-term?

"No," McIlroy answers quickly. "I've realized this program is what works for me. This is what I need to do to be my best, so I'm going to keep doing it."

One thing the program doesn't include is drastic change. Without saying so, McIlroy clearly is not following Woods' playbook. At 165 pounds on a 5-9 frame with body fat of only 10 percent, McIlroy says, "I'd like to put on another 10 or 12 pounds. That will happen over time. It would be functional. The more mass you have in the body, the more mass you can transfer into the golf ball. It's simple physics. If I was going to put any muscle on, it would be in my lower half anyway. I wouldn't want to get any bigger on top."

He's not going to change his swing. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it. That's my motto," he says. He's also careful about dramatically altering practice to focus on weaknesses like sand play (123rd on tour last year).

"You're not going to be great at everything," McIlroy says. "I think what a lot of guys do, which is understandable, is they really try to strengthen their weaknesses. And then they neglect their strengths, and even if the weaknesses get a little better, the strengths aren't as strong.

"The foundation of my game is my driving. When I drive the ball well, I win golf tournaments. So I'll always work on the driver."

McIlroy (with an assist from Watson) has returned the driver to its position as a key weapon of dominance. Though Woods played around driver inconsistency, McIlroy has harkened back to Nicklaus and Greg Norman (and the early Woods) in the way he has combined power and accuracy as the main point of separation from his peers.

In his last tournament of 2014, the Emirates Australian Open, McIlroy was obligated to play as defending champion but was so visibly tired that even his driver didn't work very well on the way to a T-15 finish. But after seeing that Jordan Spieth had shot a closing 63 to win by six, McIlroy tweeted: *You could give me another 100 rounds today at The Australian and I wouldn't sniff 63. . . . Well done.*

"It was a very tough day to score," McIlroy says. "I just wanted people to know how good a round it was. And I like Jordan."

It's nice to be nice. Nick Faldo, who was McIlroy's first golf hero, tells a story of when a 12-year-old Rory was playing in the Faldo junior series.

"He had all the stuff you see today: an incredible full and free release of the club that gives him that very rare, true 100-percent strike," Faldo says. "But what most struck me was something else. At that time, my daughter Emma had just been born, and some of the kids had come over to see her and hold her. Fast-forward seven years, and I see Rory for the first time again at a tournament. The first thing he says to me is, 'How's Emma?' I found that extraordinary for someone who was clearly going to be a champion. He's able to do what so many of us couldn't or didn't during our playing days: Take the blinkers off and be a whole person. And he still does."

It's that attribute—if McIlroy ends up winning a lot of majors as big as this year's Masters—that might make him the most complete player of all.



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Let's face it: You'll probably never sip from a centuries-old claret jug or have a major championship trophy sitting on your mantel. But you can be the champion of golf's coveted "The Hardest Holes of the Four Majors" contest created by Gold Toe® socks and Golf Digest.

Simply go to www.golfdigest.com/go/hardesthole to let us know which hole you think will be the biggest par-buster—the one that yields the most bogeys, doubles, and triples, and ends up with the highest above-par scoring average—at the first major championship of 2015. If you're correct, you'll be eligible for a chance to win championship-quality golf-related prizes such as a top-of-the-line set of irons, Gold Toe socks, and more.



Finding a hole in one of our socks might be more challenging than the toughest hole at one of this year's major events. Golf Digest will track the scoring average of each hole throughout each tournament and reveal the results upon its conclusion. For the first major, contest entries will be accepted from March 17 to April 8.

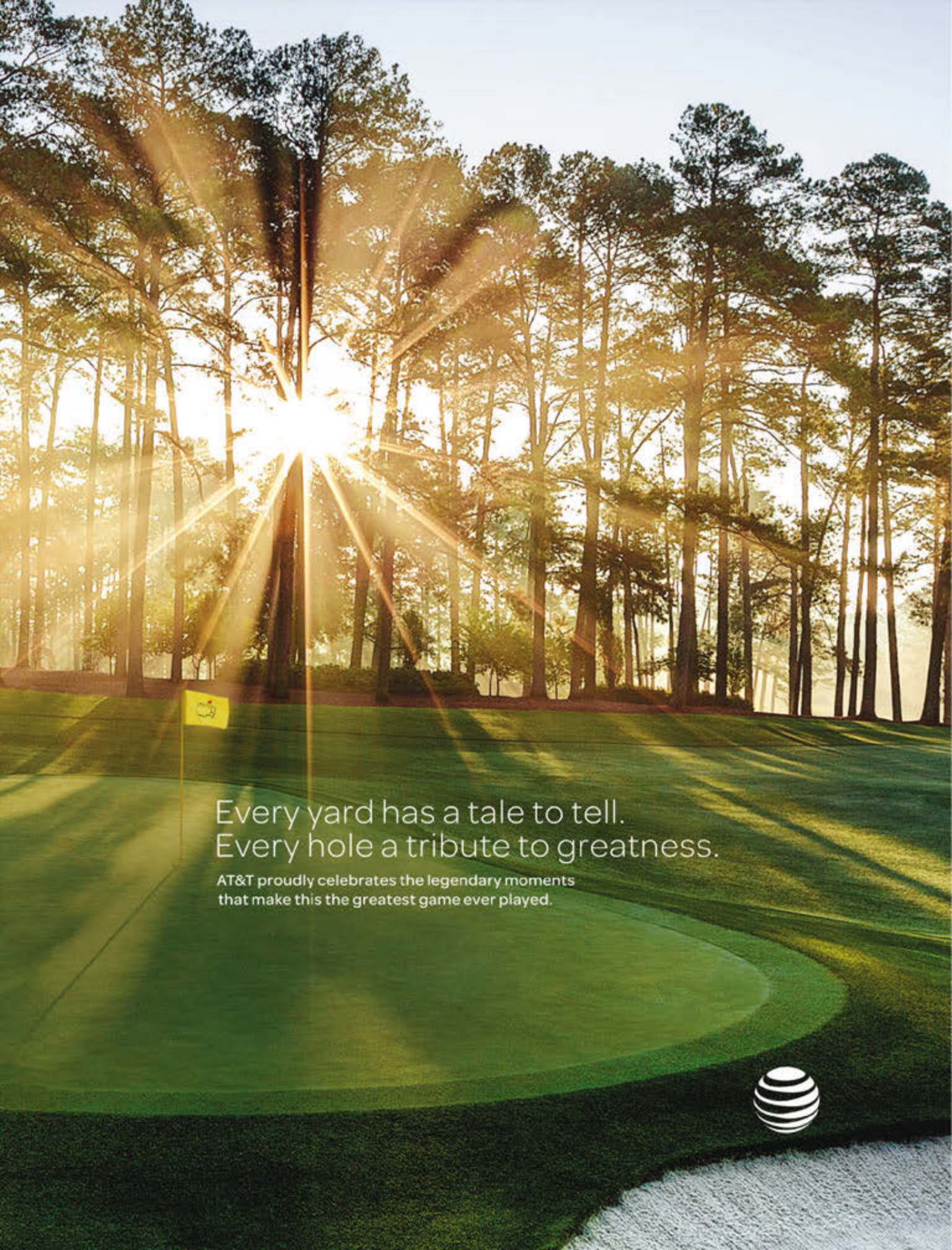
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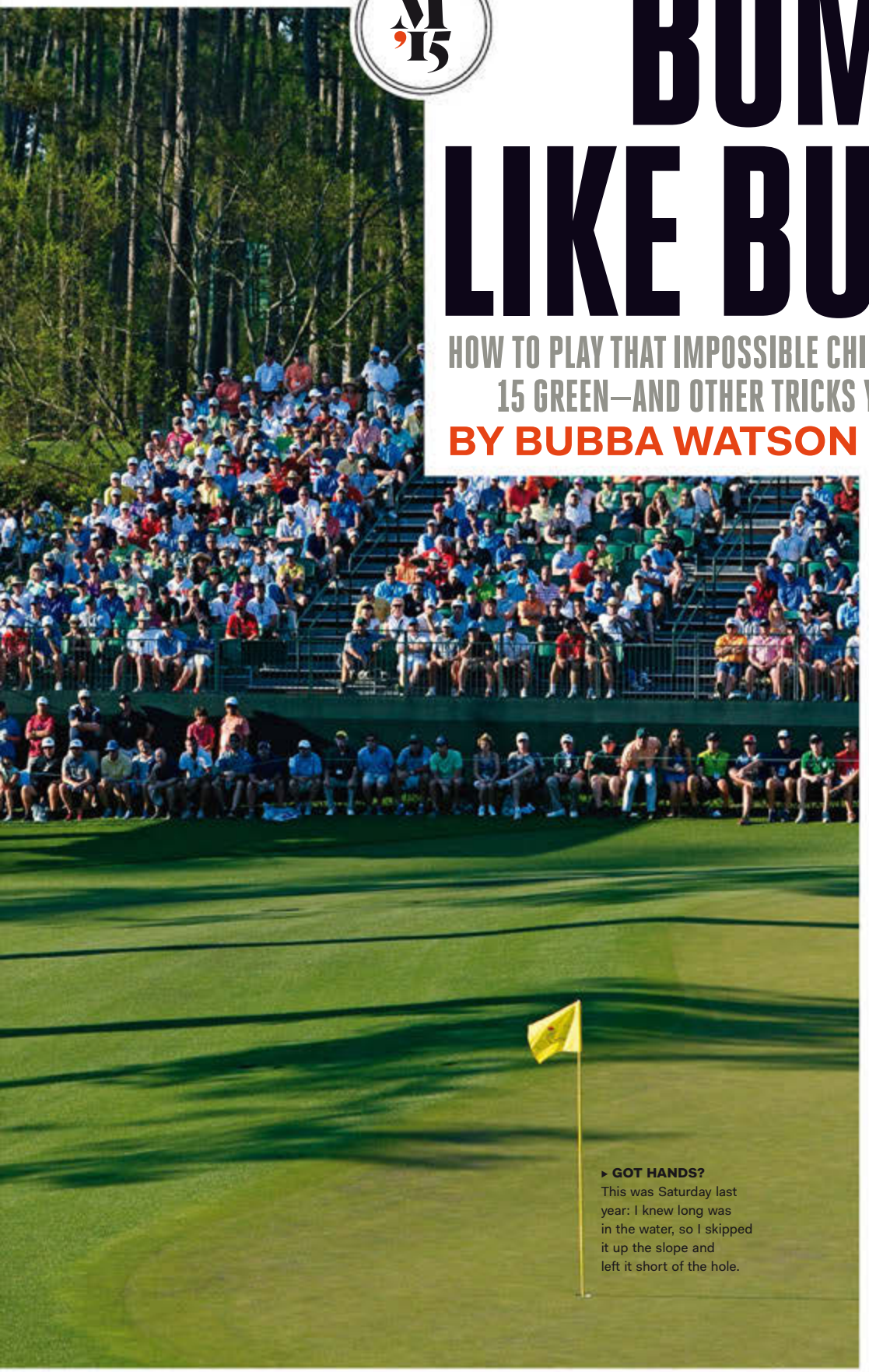
Photograph by J.D. Cuban

M '15

BUMP IT LIKE BUBBA

HOW TO PLAY THAT IMPOSSIBLE CHIP FROM BEHIND 15 GREEN—AND OTHER TRICKS YOU NEED AT AUGUSTA

BY BUBBA WATSON



▸ **GOT HANDS?** This was Saturday last year: I knew long was in the water, so I skipped it up the slope and left it short of the hole.

Every shot around the greens at Augusta is scary. Sometimes you're just thinking, *Where do I make my bogey?* The lies are tighter than anywhere else, and the greens are faster. Plus, you always seem to be chipping into the grain—it's the way they mow the grass. If your club catches a little, you duff it.

Perfect example is behind 15 green (*left*): The grass back there is crazy tight. If you give your chip shot a little too much gas, you're in the water on the other side. I was behind that green three out of four days last year. I use my 63-degree wedge for everything, but there I de-lofted it and hit a low, checking chip, trying to bounce it twice before the green and get it to trickle from the fringe. To hit that shot, I keep my feet together, play the ball off my back foot, and set my weight and my hands toward the target. Then I make a short, punchy swing, hitting down on the ball and making sure my hands stay ahead of the clubhead.

I play that low skip shot all over Augusta, because I know I'm going to hit it solid and have a good chance to control the rollout. Hitting flop shots is a blast, but with tight lies, if you don't get them perfect, you're cooked. That place is scary enough without flop shots.

—with Peter Morrice

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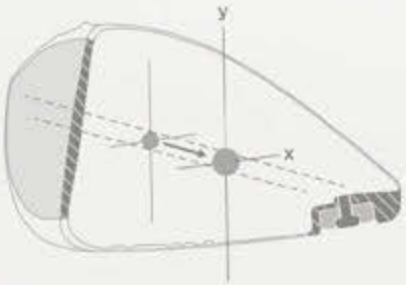
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At 11, **LUCY LI** had won at Augusta, played the Open at Pinehurst, and learned the art of balancing ice cream and veggies. Now 12, she's just getting started.



WITH GUY YOCOM

Photographed by Cody Pickens on Jan. 25, 2015, at Palo Alto Hills Golf & Country Club.

I'M ONLY 5-3 AND 100 POUNDS, but I hit my driver about 230 yards. My 7-iron flies 130 yards. I was wondering, what if tomorrow I woke up with superhuman powers and suddenly was 100 yards longer off the tee and 50 yards longer with the irons? That would be the coolest thing. I think my handicap would be five strokes lower. Instead of being a plus-3.1, I'd be a plus-8. Maybe I'd be as good as Bubba Watson.

I WATCH MORE MEN'S GOLF on TV than women's golf, only because there's more of it to watch. The men seem to be on all the time. Why is that? I don't think it's very fair.

• • •

NONE OF MY FRIENDS in California watched the Drive, Chip and Putt on TV last year. My feelings weren't hurt by that. My 10-11 age group at Augusta National came on at 8 a.m., which meant it was 5 a.m. in California. I wouldn't get up at 5 a.m. to watch golf, either.

• • •

WHEN I WON my age group, I felt pressure only on the drive part. It was held on the practice range, with one of the practice greens right in the area where I wanted to land my drive. My first tee shot landed on the side of that green, which kicked it out of the 30-yard-wide zone. You get only two drives, so I was a little nervous. This time I aimed 10 feet farther to the right. It came off really good and caught the downslope at the rear of the practice green and bounced forward. It went 227 yards. My brother saw a tweet from someone who said Darren Clarke was there watching and was impressed. I was so excited!

• • •

HOW CAN YOU GO to the Masters and not bring home some souvenirs? I got a really pretty sterling-silver necklace with a Masters emblem that I love wearing. I also got some neat cups with the Masters logo.

THE DRIVE, CHIP AND PUTT was a great experience, but I'm afraid I can't make it this year due to scheduling. Scheduling as in, school. I don't want to get behind. But I do hope to see a lot of kids take part in it. I think I learned a lot from it.

• • •

IF YOU WANT TO GET little kids hooked on golf, make sure they get to be with their friends. They'll for sure have fun that way. Grown-ups are fun to play with, too, but when it comes to golf, there's no substitute for kids being around people their age.

• • •

WHEN I WAS 4, I enjoyed swimming and really liked jumping into the water. So I began jumping off the spring diving board and then graduated to platform diving—a 10-meter platform, which is a little over 30 feet. When I play golf, some of the same principles that go into diving transfer to golf. You have to be calm and very focused before you jump—or hit the shot in golf. If you're not paying attention, you'll make a bad splash.



▸ I DIDN'T TRY A PIMENTO-CHEESE SANDWICH AT THE MASTERS. I LIKE CHEESE, JUST NOT WITH BREAD.

▸ MOST GOLFERS WORRY TOO MUCH ABOUT CONSEQUENCES. IF YOU'RE THINKING ABOUT ANYTHING OTHER THAN WHERE YOU WANT YOUR BALL TO GO, YOU'RE INVITING BAD THINGS TO HAPPEN.



AFTER I SHOT 78-78 and missed the cut at the U.S. Women's Open, we stayed over at Pinehurst to watch so I could learn. On Sunday, I was following Michelle Wie and was so impressed when she made that 25-foot putt on the 17th hole. Amazing.

• • •

THAT DONALD ROSS designed some tough courses. Even good shots would roll off Pinehurst's turtleback greens and create really difficult recoveries. Every time that happened, I'd turn to my caddie, Bryan Bush, and say, "I think I just got Rossed." I kept picturing the spirit of Mr. Ross looking down and smiling at all the chaos he caused.

• • •

THE WEATHER WAS SO HOT at Pinehurst. I had no problem falling asleep at night. Then again, I have no trouble sleeping ever. I can sleep from 9:30 p.m. to almost 8 a.m. Ten-and-a-half hours, no problem.

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PEOPLE THOUGHT it was funny seeing me eat ice cream during my post-round interviews at Pinehurst. But eating ice cream is nothing unusual for me. I eat it on a regular basis. I also eat a ton of vegetables, so it evens out.

• • •

WHEN I WAS 4, I modeled in a national advertisement for Home Depot. I had my arms around a globe of the earth. I also did a cereal ad. The neat thing about that was, my big brother, Luke, and I got to eat pre-sweetened cereal all morning long.

• • •

I TRY TO CHOOSE the tees that make a course play at 6,200 yards. At the Open, Pinehurst No. 2 was 6,649 yards. A few of the par 4s were about 450 yards long. In the practice rounds I couldn't reach them in two, but when the tournament started, I suddenly became 20 yards longer. I reached them all. I guess it was the adrenaline.

• • •

JACK NICKLAUS has talked about making courses shorter, rolling back the golf ball and other ideas to make golf faster, easier and more fun. I agree with him. A big concern for me is the environment. If courses were shorter, they wouldn't need as much water. One day, I could see golf being played in a large stadium, with a single hole changing into a different hole after the last one was complete. You'd actually hit the ball and watch it fly the whole distance, but after that a simulator would take over and change the landscape for the next shot. Mounds, covered with artificial turf, would grow or shrink. A green would rise. Giant fans would change the direction of the wind. You could play a whole round in an hour. And it would be a blast.

• • •

THERE CAN NEVER BE a perfect round. You know why? Nature. One blade of grass can decide whether a putt goes in the hole. Add that blade of grass to a tiny puff of wind here, and a hard piece of ground there, and it's just filled with imperfection. Other games have all kinds of dimensions and uniform playing fields. Golf has very few. That's why I love it so much.

• • •

I USED TO BE SUPERSTITIOUS. In tournaments I had to have a ball numbered "1." I also drew a star on every ball, as well as a circle that went all the way around the ball. One day I tried a different-numbered ball and played great. Then I stopped drawing the stars—it was too exhausting. Then I reduced the line from a full circle down to half a circle. Today I just mark my ball and go play.

• • •

I LEARNED TO SET a mental wake-up alarm. A couple of times, my parents woke me up later than I needed to be ready for an early tee time. So I started using my mental alarm clock. I'll say, *OK, I need to wake up at 6:30 a.m.* At 6:30 sharp, I'll wake up. I don't why it works, but I haven't slept through one yet.

I'M MY MOM'S GPS. It's the best part of having a photographic memory. When she drives me to a tournament in some far-off place, I'm able to get us back to the main highway by recognizing streets and landmarks I saw on the way there. I haven't got us lost yet.

• • •

TRUST YOUR INTUITION. Rory McIlroy was my favorite player before he was super-famous and winning everything. Something I can't describe told me he was going to be really, really good. Intuition is important in everything. If you hit your 7-iron 130 yards but something tells you to hit the 6-iron, hit the 6.

• • •

WHEN YOU GET A GOOD BOUNCE, consider how lucky you were that a bad shot turned out great. When you get a bad bounce, think only about how well you hit the ball.

• • •

I DON'T WEAR A GLOVE. One reason is, I think I get more feel. Another reason is, Ben Hogan didn't wear one, and he was the best. The last reason is, Luke wears one, and he goes through five of them in a month, which seems like a pain.

• • •

AFTER THE U.S. OPEN, I received commendations from the Speaker of the House, John Boehner, and Rep. Jackie Speier. I was so thrilled that I was jumping up and down. I was inspired by the letters and very happy that I was lucky enough to actually have an impact on the game. The two-framed letters are placed in my room. Every time I look at them, I feel extraordinarily honored to receive such encouraging letters from the most amazing and influential people.

• • •

MY FAVORITE SUBJECT is history. I've read a bunch of the Kenneth C. Davis books. You know, the *Don't Know Much About . . .* series. Did you know that after Abraham Lincoln was shot, he might have survived if three doctors didn't probe the wound? The probing and introducing all kinds of bacteria greatly reduced his chances of survival.

▸ THE GREENS AT AUGUSTA NATIONAL WERE MUCH FASTER THAN THE GREENS AT PINEHURST. NOT EVEN CLOSE. TOO FAST!



▸ IF I COULD GO BACK IN TIME, THE PERSON I'D WANT TO TALK TO MOST IS BOBBY JONES.

MY FAVORITE BOOK SERIES is the Percy Jackson stories by Rick Riordan. And I love the *Hunger Games* trilogy. But my favorite book is *Animal Farm* by George Orwell. It's a story about things that happened leading up to the Russian Revolution, but it's really about people. To me, it describes how seemingly innocent beings such as animals can easily become corrupted by power.

• • •

I LOVE THAT MOVIE "The Greatest Game Ever Played," about Francis Ouimet winning the U.S. Open in 1913. The most amazing thing about Ouimet is that his father didn't want him to play golf. How can someone be successful without the support of their parents?

• • •

IN A NINE-HOLE tournament once I shot 28 and beat a girl who shot 30. The girl's father got angry with her, which made no sense, and she got mad at me, which also made no sense. I could feel the hostility, but I ignored it. Another time I was paired with the same girl. By accident she walked to the wrong tees. I reminded her where we were hitting from, and it all changed. We became friends. I think if you try to be kind to people no matter what, eventually they'll come around.

FIRST ROUND OF THE YEAR. You find your clubs and head with your buddies to a soggy local course to do the thing you've been dreaming about for months—play golf.

Your swing thought is pithy: *See the ball. Hit the ball. Find the ball.* And you play great! Your swing is working effortlessly. You've identified the formula. What a season it's going to be.

Careful. You might be a victim of the "honeymoon round," an actual thing, it turns out.

"It's definitely real," says Tom Ferraro, Ph.D., a psychologist in Williston Park, N.Y., who works with elite athletes. "It involves expectations—there are none, usually. Your body is healthy. The game is fresh and interesting. You have an empty mind, more or less. And then the fun begins. Soreness and stiffness happen. Expectations happen."

Some wise Chinese philosophers explained this long ago. In his new book, *Trying Not to Try*, Edward Slingerland, Ph.D., a professor of Asian studies at the University of British Columbia, describes a state the Daoists and the Confucians called *wu-wei* (pronounced ooo-way), meaning effortless action or non-doing, which sounds a lot like a honeymoon round. You care, but you're not trying. Good golf is just happening to you.

"Most sports require you to be in wu-wei—relaxed, absorbed, focused but not tense—to be successful," Slingerland says. "But it's particularly important for sports like golf and tennis because they focus on the individual, and so the outside pressure is heavier."

There's also a suddenness to that first round, says sport psychologist Gio Valiante, Ph.D., author of *Golf Flow* (a kind of Western version of wu-wei). And it can work in your favor. "You're shoved into the present. You're fearful, so your alertness is high, and that's a good thing. No recent history, no past, just present," Valiante says. "It's more target, less thinking, and that's what flow is: not thinking."

A break from playing can produce this freshness, too, says Richard Coop, Ph.D., who has advised golfers for three decades. "College coaches give their kids time off, and people say, 'Hey, they should be working harder, not resting.' But the coaches are trying to get the freshness back." Professional golfers like Bruce Lietzke and more recently Phil Mickelson swear by such breaks.

The problem for weekend golfers, Coop says, is that when they experience that great post-layoff round, they not only want to bottle it, they figure it's their new normal. "Now the whole year is going to be like that. That's just not realistic. You're not going to suddenly raise your normal."

Trying to bottle the feel of the first day back is futile, Valiante says, because we feel things contextually, not absolutely. The swing feel that produced a gentle draw on Saturday creates a snap-hook a week later. He says it's akin to our memory of music. "You love a song because of some emotional connection. Then you hear it a year or two later, and the song feels like nothing special. What happened? In golf, two years is 24 hours." Our nature, Valiante says, is to try to get back to it. "But it's not about that. It's about being in the present," he says, "with each individual shot."

In short, if you recapture anything, make it that "see the ball, hit the ball" mode. And know that the feel of your swing might be different. Johnny Miller said he decided whom he was going to swing like after he had warmed up. One day he was himself, one day he was Lee Trevino (playing a slight cut), one day he was Tony Lema (a big draw).

Coop's advice for looking back on honeymoon rounds: "Get outside yourself. *Was I more forgiving? Was I more patient? Was I more conservative?* Try to do that the next round." Perhaps, he says, it was your just-happy-to-be-here attitude or the friends you were with. "Try committing yourself to things that bring the spontaneity back. Your score will take care of itself."

Valiante and Slingerland recommend meditation as a path to "mindfulness," which could be said to characterize a honeymoon round. For one, meditation enhances physical awareness. (Doing an eyes-closed, toes-to-nose tensing and relaxing of muscles is one form.) Meditation also clears the mind, which is important given that it's often the accumulation of swing thoughts—and judgments—that sabotages subsequent rounds.

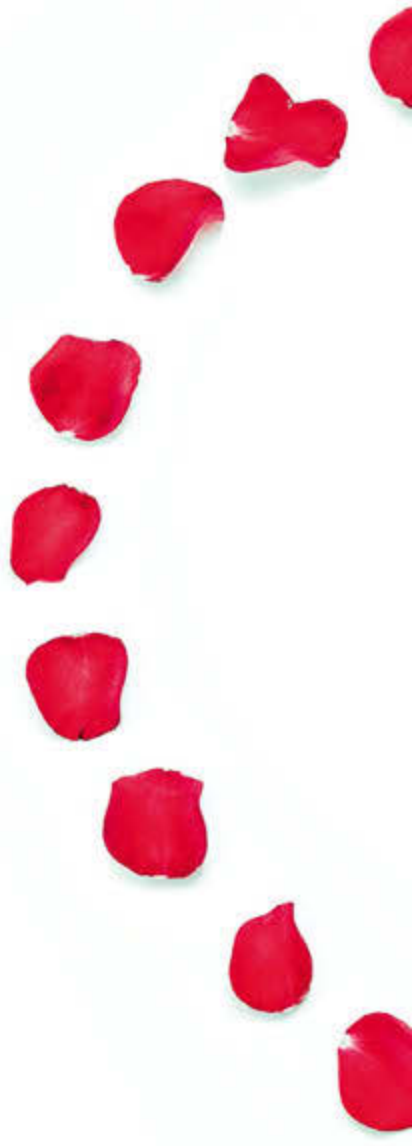
This isn't to suggest that you should abandon breaking 80 or some other grand goal. Just remember that it might happen in a way you don't plan, and it might feel out of your control. In his book, Slingerland includes this enigmatic quote from the spiritual teacher Shunryu Suzuki, who wrote *Zen Mind, Beginner's Mind*: "You cannot try, but you also cannot not try; trying is wrong, but not trying is also wrong."

Which is to say: Give it your all, and expect nothing. "Have to, need to, or should—these are the language of expectations," says Debbie Crews, Ph.D., who works with athletes at Arizona State. Replace those with "a thought, word or picture that describes your intention. Example: 'the fairway' or 'in the hole.' Then your internal system has a clear instruction to follow. The trash cans on the tees work very well for throwing away expectations. It's a choice."

And if all else fails, see P.G. Wodehouse and his character Wallace Chesney, who one day ruins the magical plus-fours that have transformed his game, returns to his bumbling state and has an epiphany.

"Wallace Chesney stood on the tee watching the spot in the water where his third ball had fallen. The crowd was now openly amused, and, as he listened to their happy laughter, it was borne in upon Wallace that he, too, was amused and happy. . . . This, he felt, was something like golf. This was golf as it should be—not the dull, mechanical thing which had bored him during all these past weeks of his perfection, but a gay, rollicking adventure . . . "

Talk about wu-wei.



Photograph by Fredrik Broden



FOR THE LOVE OF SPRING

WHY THOSE **FIRST ROUNDS BACK** ARE SO SWEET AND CAN YOU KEEP IT GOING?

BY BOB CARNEY



HOW TO MAKE SCARY SHOTS SIMPLE

THE STANFORD WOMEN SHOW YOU HOW TO HIT THE SHOTS THAT SAVE ROUNDS BY JOSH ZANDER
WITH RON KASPRISKE

IF YOU GET A CHANCE TO SEE the Stanford University women's golf team play, one thing you'll notice is that they've got guts. They're not afraid to try tough shots in competition. I helped their coach, Anne Walker, lead the team to the Pac-12 conference championship last year, and this year's team is equally gifted. I asked some of their top players to recall a gutsy shot they hit in a tournament and demonstrate it. I'll explain what they did to execute these shots, because you, too, have to face them from time to time. Now you'll be able to pull them off.

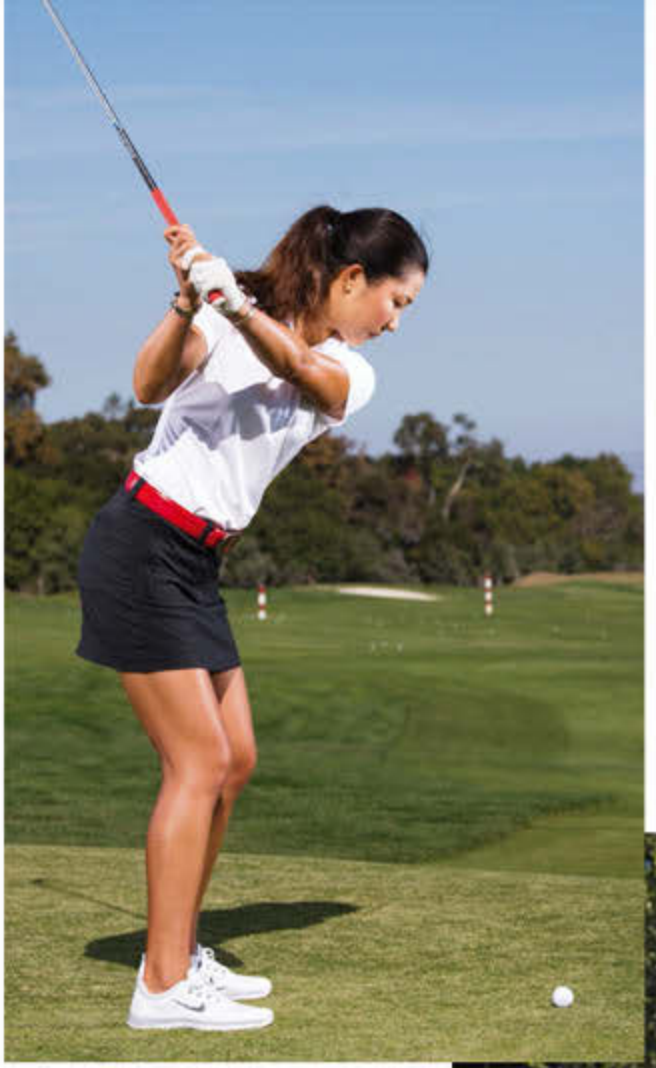
STIFFING THE 40-YARD BUNKER SHOT

QUIRINE EIJKENBOOM
Sophomore
Starnberg, Germany

At the Stanford Intercollegiate in October, Quirine was looking at a 40-yard bunker shot to a back-left pin to save par on the 13th hole. She could have babied the shot and just put it on the green. Instead, she got aggressive. "I played it like a normal fairway pitch—ball-first contact," she says. If she had purposely hit behind the ball, like a regular greenside bunker shot, she'd have had to use a longer club or a harder swing to get it close. But clipping the ball allowed her to take her most lofted wedge and swing normally.

To play this shot, stay centered over the ball as you make a half backswing. And when you swing down, shift a little toward the target. This will move the bottom of the swing arc in front of the ball so you can clip it before taking any sand. "Mine came out perfectly and rolled up near the hole," Quirine says.

Photographs by J.D. Cuban



THREADING THE NEEDLE

LAUREN KIM
Junior
Los Altos, Calif.

Hitting it arrow-straight might not seem like a specialty shot, but even Ben Hogan said he struggled to do it. Lauren needed this kind of precision on the 18th hole at an event at Stanford this past fall. "I drove it into trouble, tried to punch out, but my ball hit a branch and bounced down," she says. "I had to try to get up and down from 140 out to a tucked pin. I had to take dead aim." When you're in a situation where you can't afford to spray it, remember the keys to hitting it straight: an on-plane swing and center-face contact. Hitting it in the middle of the face reduces club-head twisting that can cause the shot to curve.

For the swing plane, here's a great thought: *Get the shaft in a mirror-image position at halfway back and halfway through.* Matching the angle of the shaft (*above*) at these points helps you stay on plane and hit it flush. Rehearse this mirror-image swing a few times, then step up and repeat it. The closer you come to matching, the more precise your shot. "My ball ended up nearly hole high, and I managed to save par," Lauren says.

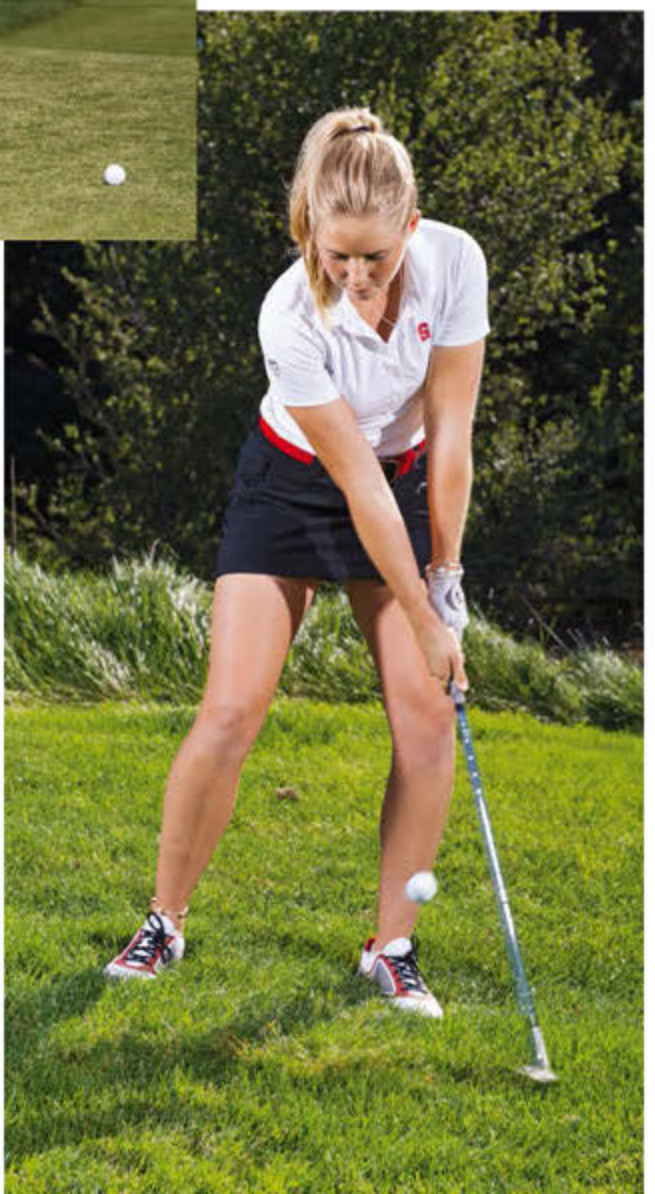
FLOPPING IT OFF A DOWNSLOPE

CASEY DANIELSON
Sophomore
Osceola, Wis.

Casey's approach on the final hole of the Pac-12 championship last year went over the green and left her with a downhill lie from the rough to a hole cut near a ledge. Leave it short, and she'd have another shot from the rough. Hit it a hair too long, and it would roll to the other side of the green. "I had to swing hard to get the ball up and stop it quick," she says. "But if I didn't get the club under the ball, I'd blade it."

Casey made some adjustments to execute this shot. She moved the ball back in her stance a little to make sure she didn't chunk the shot. She also opened the face of the wedge and lowered the shaft to get the ball to come out high and straight. Finally, she made a smooth swing, accelerating through the grass and down the slope well into her follow-through (*below*). Swinging with the slope is the big key.

"The ball popped out softly and stopped four feet from the cup," she says. "I made the putt."



FLUSHING IT FROM A SLICE LIE

MARIAH STACKHOUSE
Junior
Riverdale, Ga.

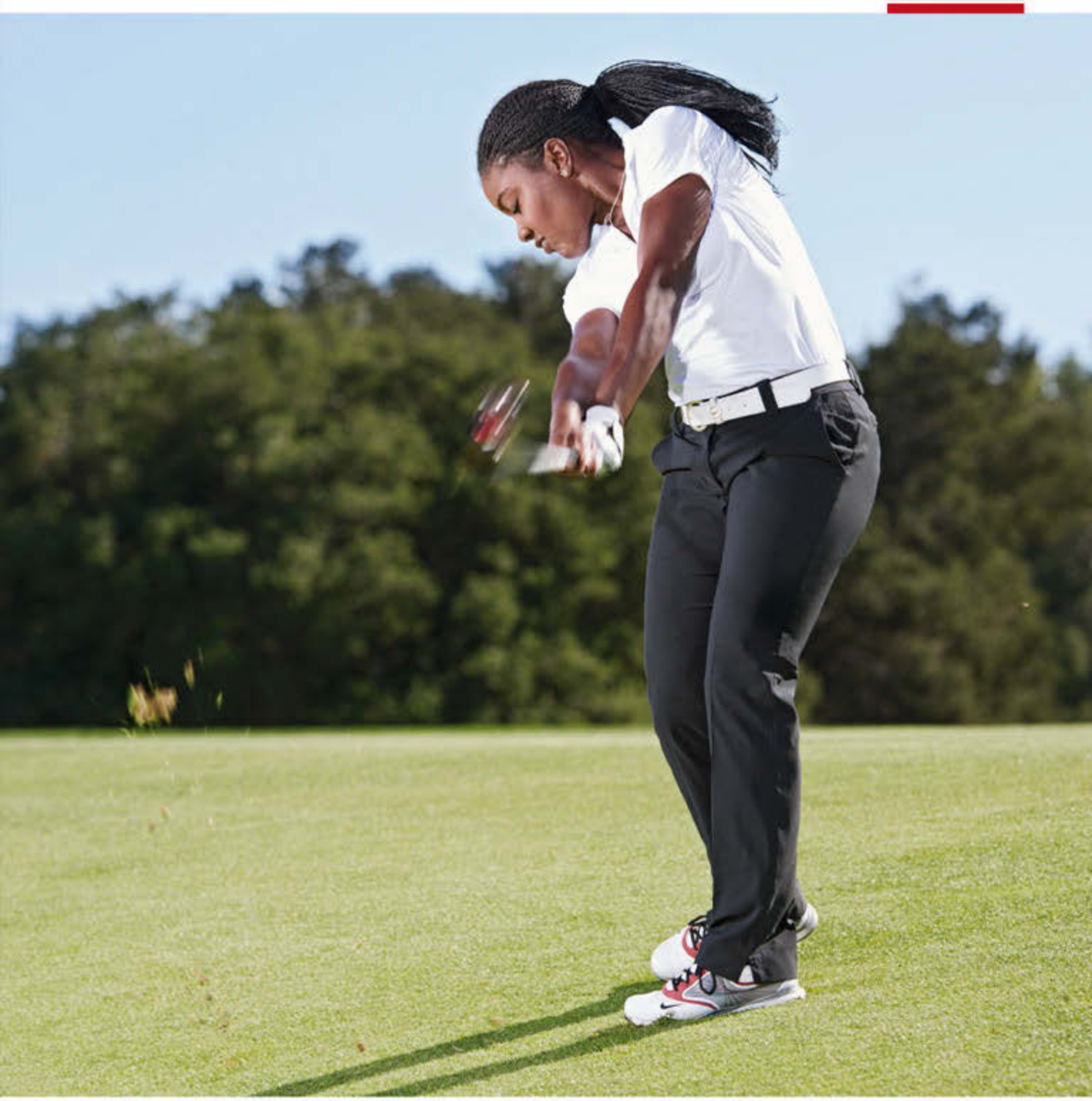
If you're not careful, a downhill, sidehill lie will make you hit a weak slice. Mariah knew that when she faced this situation late in the round at an alternate-shot tournament a few years back. "My partner knocked it in the water off the tee on a par 5," she says. "After the drop, I could still reach the green, but the ball was below my feet."

When you face this lie, focus on two things: (1) Close your stance so your body is aligned well right of the green. You might think this will make a slice worse, but what it does is promote an in-to-out swing path that counters the effects of the lie. (2) Keep some flex in your knees and use your rear end as a counterbalance to swing in control. When the ball is below your feet, it's difficult to catch it solidly if you alter your posture.

Mariah made these tweaks and even drew the ball. "It rolled up to about five feet," she says.

'BALL BELOW YOUR FEET? STAY DOWN THROUGH IMPACT LIKE MARIAH IS DOING HERE.'

JOSH ZANDER



Continued from page 121

maces loading hot dogs into the cooker, she tells me about her raw vegan diet. Before this job, she worked in human resources for a large corporation. "It was total culture shock. Every single day golfers were saying things to me that would get them fired in a professional setting."

Other cart girls stop by the shack to tell me their stories.

"I drove up to a group one time, and the guy holds out a $50 bill and says, 'Let's see your chest.' I was shocked. And a little worried. You're on your own out there, no manager or anything. But I just kind of shut them down. And after that they seemed a little embarrassed."

The prevailing theory among the girls is that this isolation works differently for the golfers: Guys feel free to say anything they want because the golf course is an open space. In restaurants there are other waitresses and bartenders and patrons to quickly fend off animals, but the cart girl is alone.

"Old guys are fine," Sally tells me. "They can be pretty dirty, but you know they're harmless. Middle-age guys are the worst. You can tell when a guy's just caged up at home. He's got his ring on, but you can just sense that this is his only release for any out-of-line behavior."

More advice: "If you're wearing bright colors, you'll get better tips. And a skirt. They love short skirts."

Adds Claire: "I'll never forget this one. I drove up to a group and asked the guys what they wanted to drink. One guy says, I'll take a PBR, a Coors, and a shot of your bath water."

The next day I work at a higher-end course. At over $200, the green fee is more than three times as expensive. I shadow Sam, who spent four years in the Navy, is a mother of two, and worked in bars until she got tired of the late hours. The money from the cart is just as good, she says, and her last sale is typically 4:30 in the afternoon. Her hourly wage is about $5, but in a really good nine-hour shift she can make $500 in tips.

But this morning is chilly, which doesn't portend a good payday. "It's freezing!" Sam says in her gravelly voice, juggling thermoses with a cigarette pressed between her lips. "I can't keep up with the coffee orders. It better warm up so I can start selling more booze."



'If you're wearing bright colors, you'll get better tips.'

KNOW YOUR HAND GESTURES

The beverage-cart girl doesn't want to bother you unless you want something. To signal her, make eye contact, smile, nod and gesture with a sweeping cross-body wave that finishes over your opposite shoulder. Don't do one of the following:

'SAFE' ARM SIGNAL I have literally no idea what you're saying. This isn't baseball.

GENERAL YELLING Beverage carts are run by gas. I can't hear a word.

THE CLASSIC WAVE This is useless because I don't know if you're saying hi or bye.

THUMBS UP Are you saying you're good, you don't want anything? Or is that yes, it would be good to have a beer?

POINTING Do you want me to come over? Or are you telling me to go far, far away?

AVERTED EYES Pretty rude, but at least I know you don't want to buy anything.

'COME HITHER' HAND MOTION Creepy, but clear.

Because this club has a lot of repeat customers, I can sense the genuine camaraderie Sam has with many of the players. One asks about her kids and a recent trip. She's smiley and bubbly the whole time. She likes this job.

"I have a pretty dirty sense of humor as it is," she tells me. "Whenever someone comes at me with something, it's generally not going to bother me. But once in a while someone says something surprising. People ask for weed, which is stupid. I've also been offered money for . . . favors. Which is like, if I wanted to do that, I'd be doing something else. People will offer you $100 to take off your shirt. And when I say no, they say things like, 'Oh, you're not an entrepreneur?' "

Apparently, there's a correlation between the cost of the green fee and the rate for going topless.

Sam's biggest pet peeve is when people bring their drinks. Not only is it illegal, it makes it tough to know when they're drinking too much.

"During the round, I'll get to each group three, maybe four times. Over four hours, you're not getting drunk off that. But when guys start bringing their own stuff, that's when we have problems." Sam points to a severe downslope where a participant at a recent bachelor party flipped a cart.

As for outfits, Sam says, "Tight shirts really help. You don't even have to show skin, just curves." She pulls out another cig as we restock the cart. "I've got my Saturday shirt on, but this cold is cutting into tips!" She unzips her jacket to reveal a tight-fitting lululemon top. Later, when the sun warms the air to maybe 50 degrees, she'll remove the jacket entirely. It's nice to stay warm, but we're here to make cash.

The other critical part of Sam's look: The absence of her wedding ring.

"When I first started, one of the girls told me to take off my wedding ring. My husband's in the golf business, and when I told him he was like, *Of course, take off the ring!* There's just an understanding, this is how things work."

Consciously, Sam played the role of a flirty cart girl to become something that was expected. In turn, the dirty jokes she received on the course were also expected. She seemed at peace with it. I asked why she thought this culture existed. (Not one cart girl I spoke with ever went out with a golfer; they'd accept phone numbers and throw them out.) Sam didn't have an answer. She said she'd never questioned it.

Back at the office, as I transcribed the contents of the spy pen, I remembered something Sally told me. She'd complained about how women golfers seem to not like you when you're out in the beverage cart—as if they're intimidated or something. "But it's funny," she said. "Once you get them talking, they're so sweet. And a lot of the time, when they leave they say, 'You have the best job in the world, don't you?' "

Best in the world is a heavy title, but there are obvious upsides: You're outside, you're often dealing with people on vacation, so they're usually happy, the pay is decent, and the hours are better. And when a guy says something out of line, the motive is almost always humor.

And these girls can take a bad joke.

"We measure it in smiles on the faces of these kids."

(*continued from page 72*)

absolutely be worth more than the U.S. Open, but that's never going to happen," said the source, referring to the $93-million-a-year, 12-year deal the USGA signed with Fox Sports in 2013. "There was talk back when the Masters went without sponsors during the Martha Burk controversy [2003-'04] that it might go to pay-per-view," the source said. "If they did, they could get $100 for the weekend and get two million to three millions buys. Do the math on that. But they're never going to leave CBS."

For CBS, the prestige and ratings provide a platform for the network at an event that tops the golf ratings year after year. (The final round of Tiger Woods' 1997 Masters victory drew a rating of 14.1, an all-time record for golf.)

For Augusta National, the trade-off for the one-year contracts and for walking away from such a cash windfall is that the club has complete control over how its event is portrayed on TV. Ask Gary McCord, who was banned for his "bikini wax" description of the greens, or Chris Berman, who is passionate about golf but is said to be too over the top by Augusta National to be part of ESPN's coverage.

Still, the bottom line is impressive. Though domestic TV is a break-even deal and concessions also break even, at best, there is the $34.75 million from tickets sales and that $25 million in broadcast rights to 190 overseas territories. There is also the $47.5 million in merchandise and $7.75 million in concessions. That gets us to $115 million before expenses.

And what are those expenses? An apparel-industry source says Augusta National operates on a 65 percent mark-up in the merchandise pavilion, cutting the overall net revenue to about $98.4 million. There is also about $9 million in prize money and expenses for security, salaries, maintenance, year-round operations, player hospitality, and food and beverages provided for the public and corporate-entertainment packages. Experts in sports marketing and tournament management say that totals about $50 million.

Those estimates would bring net revenue to $48.4 million. Even if Augusta National paid the highest tax rate of 39.6 percent, the tax bill would be $19.2 million, leaving a profit of $29.2 million (versus $7 million in the 1997 Golf Digest report).

BUILDING MORE INFRASTRUCTURE

Payne has been busy putting that money to work. Under his leadership, Augusta National built not only Berckmans Place but also well-hidden hospitality facilities for its corporate partners next to the 10th hole. And a Golf Digest report last year of real-estate sales records from 1999-2014 showed the club spent $55 million to purchase 100 acres around the golf course.

Part of that land was used to move parking off the original club property, across Berckmans Road, and allow the construction of a state-of-the-art practice facility, which opened in 2010. The next likely move will be the destruction of the media center to the right of No. 1 fairway, replacing it with a new multimedia center farther from the course.

Though the current site of the media center could be used to expand the merchandise pavilion next door, most insiders predict the club will use that prime land for housing and/or entertainment. The thinking is that the club would like to be able to house all its members on property during club events and all the competitors during the Masters.

INVESTING BACK IN THE GAME

As Payne expands the infrastructure and revenue streams of the Masters, he's also figuring out how best to use the club's resources to grow the game domestically and globally. The Masters Tournament first began to emerge as a quasi-governing body of the game in 1997, when it signed on as one of the five founding partners of The First Tee effort to bring the game to young people, joining the USGA, PGA of America, LPGA Tour and PGA Tour.

In 2009, the tournament and the R&A launched the Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship, with a spot in the Masters going to the winner. Then in 2011, the Masters Tournament Foundation was created. The club made a $3.2 million donation to the foundation in 2012 and $2.9 million in 2011.

"We essentially give as much as we can every year, and then try as best we can to use that money in our grow-the-game efforts," Payne said at last year's chairman news conference. "It is our intention going forward to be very substantial contributors to our foundation."

The first Drive, Chip and Putt Championship for junior players took place in 2014 (*see the My Shot with Lucy Li on page 160*), and this year the club was part of an effort that created the Latin America Amateur Championship, which also offers a spot in the Masters field. The foundation gave $200,000 to the Augusta First Tee in 2012 and supports the LPGA Foundation, LPGA/USGA grow-the-game programs and other growth initiatives.

"The establishment of the Masters Tournament Foundation is central to fulfilling our responsibility of supporting the game's continuous growth around the world," Payne said.

The Asia-Pacific Amateur Championship has been an unqualified success. When it was first revealed the winner would get a spot in the Masters, some thought it was giving away a position to someone who didn't belong. But Hideki Matsuyama of Japan, who won the Asia-Pacific in 2010 and 2011, proved that wrong. He's now a rising force on the PGA Tour at the age of 23. And in 2012, Guan Tianlang of China won at the age of 14 and astounded everyone by making the cut at Augusta National.

"I think we, perhaps at Augusta, measure success, the future of the game a little bit differently," Payne said earlier this year at the Latin America Amateur Championship in Argentina. "We don't do it in numbers. We don't do it in definable, ascertainable arithmetic growth rates. We measure it in smiles on the faces of these kids. If we can create that here, see it by extension go to others, then we are very happy with the current state of the game of golf."

As with everything done at Augusta National, the club has grown its revenue with patience and discipline. As Jones and Roberts desired, it has never lost sight of the mission that the enjoyment of the player and the patron is the top priority. And it has built on that vision by giving back to the overall game. Augusta National is making more money every year, and it is doing more with it than ever before.

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Tribute

Billy Casper

A golf genius and family man gets his due

Billy Casper's colossal record in golf somehow was fated to remain hidden in plain sight, his achievements over four decades obscured by his undemonstrative manner, a nonplussed media and the Big Three of Nicklaus, Palmer and Player. After Casper passed away at 83 on Feb. 7, a more careful audit revealed some staggering truths: 51 PGA Tour wins, seventh-best all time. Three majors, including the 1959 and '66 U.S. Opens and the 1970 Masters. Eight Ryder Cup appearances and a 20-10-7 record.

Casper's game was not so much a shout as a devastating whisper. An artistic but disciplined genius who was at his best when he had the lead, he vivisected courses with every shot in golf's lexicon. He rarely made tactical mistakes and had a wristy, nerveless putting stroke that sent the ball screaming toward the back of the hole. Casper, with his insouciant, I'm-the-boss saunter and implacable facial expression, feared no man.

Not parenthetically, Casper succeeded at golf while raising 11 children, six of them adopted, with Shirley, his wife of more than 60 years. Deeply religious and persistently philanthropic, Casper walked the walk of a decent and great champion. A favorite and oft-quoted Bible passage of Casper's: "Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them." Billy Casper bore much fruit, and it's nice to finally know him better.

—GUY YOCOM



Photograph by Bryce Duffy


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